



Topic
History

Subtopic
Ancient History

Famous Greeks

Course Guidebook

Professor J. Rufus Fears
University of Oklahoma



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Professor Fears is active in lecturing to broader audiences, and his comments on the lessons of history for our own day have appeared on television and been carried in newspapers and journals throughout the United States and abroad.

On fifteen occasions, Dr. Fears has received awards for outstanding teaching. In 1996, 1999, and again in 2000, he was chosen the University of Oklahoma Professor of the Year.

In addition to *Famous Greeks*, Dr. Fears has also produced with The Teaching Company *A History of Freedom*, a thirty-six lecture survey of the ideas and institutions of freedom from antiquity to our own day.

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Famous Greeks

Scope:

Famous Greeks is an introduction to Greek history through the lives of the great individuals who made that history. From the heroes of the Trojan War to Alexander the Great and Cleopatra, we will examine the lives, achievements, and influence of seminal figures in the history of Greece: warriors, statesmen, thinkers, and artists. Our biographies will draw on the most current historical, archaeological, and literary scholarship, but our model in this endeavor will be a Greek himself, Plutarch (46–120 A.D.). In the heyday of the Roman Empire, with the glory days of Greece long gone, Plutarch composed his *Lives of the Famous Greeks and Romans*. He believed that the study of such lives makes us better as individuals and as citizens. For nineteen centuries, readers have agreed. Harry Truman, among many others, spoke of the practical political wisdom he gained from Plutarch's *Lives*. This is also true of the founders of the United States. For Harvard graduates like John Adams and self-taught men like Benjamin Franklin, Plutarch's *Lives* was a repository of wisdom, of virtues to be emulated, and of vices to be avoided. In fact, the Founders voiced the still excellent idea that a copy of Plutarch's *Lives* be placed in every school in the country. Each of our lectures will draw lessons from the lives we study.

Our lives will illuminate the intellectual and artistic currents of one of the most creative civilizations in world history. However, for the Greeks, politics was the center of human existence. "Man," Aristotle said, "is a political animal." This truth has determined our selection of lives and the approach we take. The leading thinkers, artists, and writers of classical Greece can be understood only in the context of the political events of their day. The most important single lesson we learn from Greece is that a free nation can survive only if its citizens care, at the deepest level, about politics. We focus on the five major periods of Greek history: the Trojan War; Archaic Greece of the eighth through the sixth centuries B.C.; the Persian Wars; the golden age of Athens in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C.; and the age of Alexander the Great.

For the Greeks of the classical era, the Trojan War was real history. Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* held for the Greeks a position similar to that of the Bible in Protestant Europe and America of the nineteenth century. Achilles, Agamemnon, Hector, and Odysseus were role models, and the

values of Homer resonated throughout Greek history. Alexander the Great constantly carried with him a copy of Homer. Our course begins with the background to the Trojan War and the most famous of Athenian heroes, Theseus. Lectures Two through Four are devoted to the four central figures of the Homeric epics, Achilles, Agamemnon, Hector, and Odysseus. All four lectures deal with the importance of archaeology in establishing the historical element in the tale of Troy.

The eight through the sixth centuries B.C. saw the establishment of the definitive features of Greek society in the classical period. This was the age of the great lawgivers, preeminent statesmen who gave to their nation its characteristic political, social, and religious institutions. Lectures Five and Six discuss the two most famous lawgivers of the two most important Greek cities: Lycurgus of Sparta and Solon of Athens. The mysterious figure of Pythagoras takes on new clarity when considered in the framework of these lawgivers.

The decade of the Persian Wars (490–479) was one of the most decisive in world history. It determined that Greece would remain free and bequeath to later ages the legacy of political liberty. Lectures Seven through Eleven examine the lives of five of the most important figures from the age of the Persian Wars. The rise and character of the Persian Empire are studied through the lives of Croesus, King of Lydia, and Xerxes, King of Persia. In the pages of the “Father of History,” Herodotus, Croesus and Xerxes were object lessons in the abuse of power. The salvation of Greece was the result of the bravery of ordinary men and women and the foresight and courage of their leaders. Lectures Nine through Eleven examine three of the most important of the statesmen and generals: Leonidas and Pausanias of Sparta and Themistocles of Athens. Our lectures will immerse us in the stirring deeds of the Battles of Thermopylae, Salamis, and Plataea.

The golden age of the Athenian democracy is rightly the centerpiece of our course, encompassing Lectures Twelve through Nineteen. In the lives of its politicians, artists, thinkers, and writers, we see most clearly the intimate connection between politics and culture in the Athenian democracy. Our presentation takes a novel approach to the outstanding figure of Pericles and his relationship to such seminal intellectual figures as Phidias, Anaxagoras, Sophocles, and Thucydides. We consider the role of women in the Athenian democracy through the talented Aspasia and the birth of scientific medicine associated with the name of Hippocrates. The trial of Socrates was the test case of the ideals of the Athenian democracy. We

discuss that trial in the context of the impact of the Peloponnesian War on the dynamics of Athenian politics. The execution of Socrates would condemn the Athenian democracy in the eyes of posterity, but this greatest of teachers would leave an immortal legacy in the philosophical thought of Plato and Aristotle.

In the political ideas of Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle, we see the conviction that democracy has failed and that the best form of government is the monarchy of an outstanding individual. Lectures Twenty-One and Twenty-Two introduce us to the figures of Philip of Macedonia and his son Alexander the Great, statesmen who transformed the history of Greece and the world. The Romans and their empire would be the true heirs of Alexander. Our course concludes with the lives of two remarkable figures, who challenged Rome for world domination: Pyrrhus, King of Epirus, and Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt.

Lecture One

Theseus

Scope: Theseus, the legendary founder of Athens, is an ideal introduction to our course. To the Athenians of the classical era, Theseus was not legend but historical fact. He founded Athens as a unified nation and established the prototypes of the most characteristic Athenian political and religious institutions. To Theseus, the Athenians owed their love of liberty and democracy and a foreign policy based on giving aid to the weak and helpless. In pursuit of such noble goals, Theseus traveled to the far corners of the Greek world and won eternal fame through his encounters with the Minotaur, Amazons, the Golden Fleece, and Oedipus. As is the case with the Founding Fathers of other nations, such as George Washington, the truth of such stories may be less important than the fact that the Athenians believed them to be true and used them to establish criteria for judging the character of their political leaders.

Outline

- I. The Founding Fathers of the United States believed that history was the single most useful discipline, because we can learn from the lessons of the past.
 - A. For the American Founding Fathers, ancient Greek and Roman history was especially instructive, because it shows us how democracy was born, how it flourished, and why it failed.
 - B. They also believed that biography was the most engaging means of approaching history, including the illuminating biographies of the Bible, Herodotus, and Plutarch.
- II. The classical model for the study of history through the biographies of great individuals is Plutarch (ca. 46–after 127 A.D.).
 - A. Plutarch was a Greek by birth and culture and a Roman citizen who spent much time in Rome. He was well regarded by the Emperor Hadrian and held the high imperial office of procurator of the province of Achaia (Greece).

- B. He lived in his hometown of Chaeronea, was very active in its civic life, and was a priest of the oracle of the god Apollo at Delphi.
- C. Plutarch represents the renaissance of Greek intellectual and artistic life under the Roman Empire.
- D. He was a philosopher who sought to make ethics understood and useful for non-academics.
- E. His writings include:
 - 1. *Moralia (Moral Essays)*
 - 2. *Lives of Famous Greeks and Romans*.
- F. His *Lives of Famous Greeks and Romans* is a compendium of biographies of statesmen, generally pairing and comparing a Greek with a Roman.
 - 1. Plutarch understood that biography is the most instructive way of teaching history.
 - 2. His focus on political history and biography reflected the classical Greek and Roman view that politics is the essence of human existence. “Man,” Aristotle said, “is a political animal.”
 - 3. His purpose was to shape the moral character of his reader rather than simply to present facts.
 - 4. In political terms, his goal was to echo a central theme of the Roman emperors: The Roman Empire continued and renewed the glory days of Greece
 - 5. As a biographer, Plutarch was widely read and made excellent use of numerous sources. He is factually accurate.
- G. He was a very influential biographer.
 - 1. He was regarded as a classic in late antiquity and throughout the Byzantine period.
 - 2. Translated into French and English in the Renaissance, he influenced such diverse figures as Shakespeare, Rousseau, Emerson, and President Truman.

III. Theseus was the national hero of Athens and the founding father of its most characteristic institutions and values. He was a myth (we say myth, but we must remember that to the ancients, this was regarded as history).

- A. The unacknowledged son of Aegeus, King of Athens, Theseus was raised in the city of Troezen. He belonged to the generation before the Trojan War. Thus, Theseus might be dated, in our terms, to roughly 1300 B.C.
- B. He was also reputed to be the son of Poseidon, god of the sea.
- C. At the age of sixteen, Theseus passed the test prescribed at birth for him by his father and set off for Athens to find his father.
- D. On his journey, Theseus began his career as a savior of Greece from monsters and evil doers.
- E. Arguably the most well known myth about Theseus is his encounter with the Minotaur.
- F. He eventually arrives in Athens and is recognized by his father.
- G. As king, Theseus unified Attica.
 - 1. He established a democracy and reigned as its constitutional monarch.
 - 2. He established the tradition that in matters of foreign policy, Athens used its power to defend the weak and helpless: Oedipus is given shelter at Athens by Theseus.
 - 3. Theseus was overthrown by a revolt led by Menestheus, the descendant of an earlier king.
 - 4. Theseus was murdered in exile on the island of Scyros by King Lycomedes.
- H. Shortly after the Persian Wars, in 476, the Athenian general and statesman Cimon brought the bones of Theseus back to Athens, where a shrine was built to him and he was worshipped.
- I. As the national hero of Athens, Theseus attracted involvement in other legends, to wit, his adventures with Hercules, Medea, the Amazons, and Jason and the Argonauts.

IV. Historical elements linked with Theseus include:

- A. The unification of Attica;
- B. The rise of Athens as a major power in the Bronze Age;
- C. Minoan Crete;
 - 1. The discoveries of Sir Arthur Evans (1851–1941);
 - 2. The palace at Knossos;
 - 3. The bull symbolism at Knossos;

4. The labyrinth at Knossos.

- V. Athenians of the fifth century B.C. used the deeds and values ascribed to Theseus as a standard for setting policy and judging their own actions as a democracy. In that sense, Theseus was the Athenian counterpart to George Washington.

Essential Reading:

Plutarch, *Theseus*.

Supplementary Reading:

Morford and Lenardon, *Mythology*, pp. 442–463.

Questions to Consider:

1. What does Plutarch's *Life of Theseus* tell us about the values of the Athenian democracy in the fifth century B.C.?
2. Do you think it matters if George Washington actually chopped down the cherry tree? Do school children even learn the story today?

Lecture Two

Achilles and Agamemnon

Scope: No contemporary self-help manual on leadership could offer a better example than the conflict on the plains of Troy between Achilles and Agamemnon (1250 B.C.). King of Mycenae and commander-in-chief of the Achaean army, Agamemnon had been promoted to a position beyond his competency. Unsure of himself and devoid of ideas, he is challenged for leadership by the “best of the Achaeans,” Achilles. Achilles has all the heroic virtues lacking in Agamemnon. In the judgment of his peers, he is far more qualified than Agamemnon to lead them to victory over the Trojans. Their struggle for leadership will cost the lives of thousands, and through the genius of Homer, it will be transformed into a timeless lesson in the moral dimension of politics.

Outline

- I. In classical Greece, the *Iliad* was viewed as the masterpiece of the creative genius of the poet Homer.
 - A. Its role as a source of values and inspiration for the Greeks of the classical period was comparable to that of the Bible for Protestants in nineteenth-century Europe and America.
 - B. Homer drew on the larger tradition of the Trojan War. But the *Iliad* focuses on a nine-day period in that war and on the wrath of Achilles, his conflict with Agamemnon, and the disaster this conflict brought to Greeks and Trojans alike.
- II. To the Greeks, the tale of Troy was history. Its characters were historical figures. The Trojan War could be dated, in our terms, to roughly 1260–1250 B.C.
 - A. Troy was a great city, rich in gold and horses and warriors, located at the Hellespont, where Europe joins Asia.
 - B. Helen, the wife of King Menelaus of Sparta, eloped with Paris, son of King Priam of Troy.
 1. The result of this outrage was an expeditionary force of the Greeks in 1,000 ships against Troy.

2. Agamemnon, king of the city of Mycenae and brother of Menelaus, was elected commander-in-chief.
 3. The mightiest warriors of Greece brought their armed forces to participate in the expedition. These included Achilles, King of the Myrmidons, and Odysseus, King of Ithaca.
- C. When the *Iliad* opens, the Greeks have been besieging Troy for nine years.

III. Ravaged by a plague, the Greeks called an assembly. The plague was determined to be the result of the anger of the god Apollo. Agamemnon has outraged his priest. Achilles challenges the authority of Agamemnon. Agamemnon, in turn, dishonors Achilles, stripping him of the woman he has won as a prize of war.

- A. In modern terms, Agamemnon is a CEO, promoted beyond his competency.
1. He is not the greatest warrior; that is Achilles. He is not the wisest of the Greeks; that is Nestor. He is not the most capable; that is Odysseus. Indeed, he is not even the chief victim of the war; that is his brother Menelaus.
 2. He is ruler of the wealthiest city, and his authority rests not on his personal qualities but on the claim that god—Zeus—has bestowed command upon him.
 3. Agamemnon is avaricious, ambitious, and arrogantly stupid.
 4. To achieve his command, he has slain his own daughter, offering her in sacrifice to the gods to make the winds blow favorably. He views Achilles and his reputation as a threat to himself. He feels he must humiliate Achilles in the eyes of his fellow Greek leaders.
- B. In his anger, Achilles returns to his quarters and refuses to fight any longer for the Greeks.
- C. The *Iliad* describes the following days and “the manifold woes” brought on the Greeks and Trojans as they struggle on the plains of Troy. The culmination is the death of Achilles’s dearest friend, Patroclus, killed as the direct result of Achilles’s refusal to fight.
- D. Seeking revenge, Achilles takes the field and kills Hector, the mightiest of the Trojans.

- E. The *Iliad* ends with Achilles returning the body of Hector to Hector's father, King Priam, and with the Trojans celebrating the funeral rites of Hector.
- F. The *Iliad* is the story of the moral growth of Achilles. Through his suffering, he learns compassion.
- G. Foreshadowed in the *Iliad* are the death of Achilles, the fall of Troy, and Agamemnon's return in triumph to Mycenae, only to be murdered by his wife and her lover.

IV. The *Iliad* is a literary masterpiece.

- A. Homer is unsurpassed in evoking scenes. From the beauty of the morning dawning to the horrors of war, he uses similes and metaphors with a scope, power, and appropriateness unrivaled in literature.
- B. His characters are memorable, real, and—above all—human.
- C. The *Iliad* is a great book that deals with a great theme: the meaning of life and the actions of men like Achilles who found that meaning in the idea of honor.
- D. It is a work of moral instruction.
 - 1. The British Prime Minister William Gladstone (1809–1898) believed that all we need to know about morality could be drawn from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.
 - 2. Many Greeks felt the same way.

Essential Reading:

Homer, *Iliad*.

Supplementary Reading:

Jaeager, *Paideia*, vol. I.

Morford and Lenardon, *Mythology*, pp. 348–387.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. What is Homer's view of the question of free will versus fate? What is your view?
- 2. Do you believe that Achilles or Agamemnon is the more admirable character? Who is more true to life?

Lecture Three

Hector

Scope: It is part of the genius of Homer to make Hector (1250 B.C.), the chief opponent of the Greeks, into the noblest hero of the *Iliad*. Hector is like Robert E. Lee, fighting with honor, courage, and skill for a cause he knows is doomed to defeat. Patriot, soldier, devoted husband and father, Hector embodies the virtues most admired by the Greeks and their tragic vision of life. Hector and the tale of Troy also serve to introduce us to a modern who well deserves to be ranked among the “Famous Greeks”: Heinrich Schliemann (1822–1890) was a German businessman whose faith in the historicity of Homer, coupled with his ambition, energy, and intellect, led him to discover the lost world of Hector’s Troy and Agamemnon’s Mycenae and lay the foundations of modern archaeology.

Outline

- I. The *Iliad* is the epic saga of the Greek heroic age.
 - A. It was composed around 750 B.C., five hundred years after the Trojan War, for a Greek audience that now occupied Ionia, part of the traditional lands of the Trojans and their allies.
 - B. The *Iliad* contains the components of a great book:
 - 1. It deals with a great theme: the meaning of life.
 - 2. It is written in noble language.
 - 3. It speaks across the ages.
 - 4. It summarizes the values of an age at its height—the Heroic Age.
- II. Homer understood the importance of presenting the Greeks of his story with a noble antagonist to vanquish. The Trojans fight the war with courage, honor, and devotion to their cause. Of all the Trojans, the bravest is Hector.
 - A. Hector is a superb warrior, a leader who calls forth his men’s devotion and makes them capable of supreme feats of courage.
 - B. Hector is a devoted and loving father and husband.

- C. He is a patriot; he fights for the best of causes, for his country and family.
- D. Without a sense of honor, however, bravery can be mere savagery. Honor is Hector's moral compass.
- E. The Greece of the *Iliad* is the heroic age in which warfare was a basic element of human life and great heroes fought, above all, for honor and glory.
 - 1. As Achilles and Agamemnon are foils for each other, so Hector and his brother Paris are foils for each other: Hector is forced to fight a war brought about by his brother's ignoble deed (stealing Helen from the Greeks).
 - 2. Hector fights for the honor of Troy and for his own honor. It is honor that leads him to continue the war rather than simply end it by a negotiated peace and the return of Helen. It is honor that leads him to fight the Greeks in the open field rather than choosing the strategically sounder course of remaining inside the mighty walls of Troy.
 - 3. Honor is so central to the meaning of Hector's life that he cannot understand his brother Paris and Paris's lack of concern over what men think of him.
- F. Hector is charitable.
 - 1. Helen pays the highest tribute to Hector. Of all the Trojans, he has never reproached her or made her feel guilty for all the misery she has brought to his country.
 - 2. Hector is even charitable toward his brother Paris, who has no sense of honor.
- G. Fame, to be remembered by posterity as the greatest warrior, is the goal of Hector's life. That is also the goal he seeks for his son.
- H. But Hector is also a flesh-and-blood man.
 - 1. The scene of Achilles's victory over Hector frequently puzzles readers of Homer. At the climatic moment, Hector turns and runs in terror.
 - 2. However, this only serves to make Hector seem more human and to complete Homer's portrait of him as a flesh-and-blood man, subject, as all of us are, to moments of doubt.
- I. Hector is, for Homer, that tragic hero who gives meaning to the victorious side.

1. He knows Troy must fall, but he fights on to the very end for a cause he knows to be just.
2. Great victories only gain in stature from being won over a worthy foe. The supreme military genius of Hannibal added luster to Rome's triumph over Carthage in the Second Punic War. However, Hannibal lacked the human qualities of Hector. A much closer parallel is Robert E. Lee in the American Civil War.

III. The reality of Homer's portrait of Hector raises the question of the historicity of the Trojan War.

- A. The Greeks and Romans believed that the Trojan War was real history.
- B. However, scholars in Europe in the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century subjected the *Iliad* to the same tools of higher criticism that they used on the Bible. The result was general skepticism about the historicity of the *Iliad*. The best scholars of the mid-nineteenth century regarded the *Iliad* as a fable.
- C. It was not a professor but an amateur who would prove the reality of the world of the *Iliad*.

IV. Heinrich Schliemann (1822–1890) was born in Germany, the son of a failed pastor.

- A. Schliemann was denied a higher education. But in early life, he imbibed a love of classics and history, the foundation of education in nineteenth-century Germany.
- B. He entered the business world as a teenager.
 1. His ambition, energy, and shrewdness made him a fortune by the age of thirty-five.
 2. He came to the United States and thereafter claimed U.S. citizenship.
 3. He moved to Greece, married, and followed his dream of searching for Troy.
- C. In 1870, Schliemann began excavating at the site in Turkey believed in antiquity to have been the site of Troy.
 1. By 1873, he discovered what was and remains—to the objective observer—conclusive evidence that Homer's Troy existed.

2. In 1876, his excavations at Mycenae offered equally conclusive proof of the existence of Homer's Mycenae.
- D. Schliemann won widespread recognition for his achievements.
 1. One of his strongest supporters was the British Prime Minister Gladstone.
 2. However, many academics continued to challenge his findings. In recent years, some scholars, especially in the United States, have assailed Schliemann's character, calling him "a pathological liar."
- E. Despite this "revenge of the nerds," Schliemann's achievement endures.
- V. Heinrich Schliemann demonstrated that a great city existed on the very site where the ancients believed that Troy existed.
 - A. He demonstrated that the Greek mainland, in this same time period, was the site of a warrior civilization that kept careful records in Greek of ships and war chariots.
 - B. Mycenae, Pylos, Tiryns, Knossos, Thebes, Athens, and other great cities of the *Iliad* were powerful citadels, rich in gold and fully capable of launching the kind of expedition described in the *Iliad*.
- VI. Yes, there was a Trojan War and Achilles, Agamemnon, and Hector once fought for life, power, and honor on the fields of Troy.

Essential Reading:

Homer, *Iliad*.

Supplementary Reading:

Bennet, "Homer and the Bronze Age," in Morris and Powell, *New Companion to Homer*, pp. 517–534.

Wood, *In Search of the Trojan War*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How do you define honor? Was Hector a man of honor? Is honor possible in the modern world?
2. Are either the Trojans or the Greeks or both fighting a just war? What do you mean by a just war?

Lecture Four

Odysseus

Scope: Hector and Achilles were heroes in an age of warriors. Odysseus (1250 B.C.) is the “man of many wiles,” who would be at home and flourish in our own day. Odysseus is a survivor. Achilles and Hector died on the battlefield of Troy. Agamemnon returned home in glory only to be murdered by his wife and her lover. For ten years after the fall of Troy, Odysseus was driven by the fury of the gods to wander the Mediterranean world. In the end, his prudence and courage restored him to his kingdom, home, and loved ones. Homer, the author of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, is one of the most famous Greeks. His genius transformed the story of Odysseus into a metaphor for the human experience itself. At the same time, the *Odyssey* preserved a significant kernel of historical fact concerning the events that marked the end of the Bronze Age in the Mediterranean.

Outline

- I. The *Odyssey* is the counterpart of the *Iliad*.
 - A. In antiquity, both were attributed to the creative genius of Homer.
 - B. Both are poems, structurally identical in terms of meter, the use of formulas (“cloud-gathering Zeus”), and other elements.
 - C. With regard to the story, the *Odyssey* is a sequel to the *Iliad*, drawing on its events and characters.
 - D. However, the story and spirit of the two poems are very different.
 1. The *Iliad* is a story of war and honor; the *Odyssey* is about survival.
 2. The *Iliad* concentrates all the emotions of life into a nine-day period, and the *Iliad* ends, as life must, with death. The *Odyssey* has a fairy tale quality to it. It ends in love and reconciliation.
 3. The central character of the *Odyssey* is also very different from Achilles, the central character of the *Iliad*.

- II.** Odysseus is a far more complex character than either Achilles or Agamemnon.
- A.** He is a mighty warrior, a man of honor and pride.
 - 1.** But Odysseus knows how to control his honor and pride. He is the most capable of all the Greek kings at Troy.
 - 2.** Agamemnon is the commander-in-chief, but he is extremely dependent on the advice and cooperation of his fellow kings. The assemblies in which the kings meet to give counsel make the rule of Agamemnon a form of parliamentary monarchy.
 - 3.** Odysseus is the outstanding member of the assembly. A gifted orator, his advice is prudent without being pusillanimous. He is clever, cunning, and deceptive—all the skills needed to succeed in life.
 - B.** The Greeks believed that character is revealed by misfortune. The *Odyssey* is the story of the misfortunes of Odysseus and how his character enabled him to survive and triumph over misfortunes.
- III.** When the story opens, Odysseus has been wandering for ten years. At the moment of triumph over Troy, the Greeks committed an act of *hybris* (outrageous arrogance) dragging the prophetess Cassandra from the altar of the temple of Athena. The gods took vengeance on the Greeks, making the homecoming of many of them difficult. As the *Odyssey* begins, the gods decide that Odysseus has suffered enough and can return home.
- A.** Odysseus is on the island of the nymph Calypso, loved by her but longing for home.
 - B.** Unknown to Odysseus, his kingdom of Ithaca is in chaos. Greedy nobles infest his home; eat up his food; pay court to his loyal wife, Penelope; and treat his son, Telemachus, with contempt.
 - C.** At the order of Zeus, Calypso helps Odysseus sail for home. But the unappeased wrath of the god Poseidon sends a storm that drives Odysseus to the island of the Phaeacians, ruled over by King Alcinous, with his daughter Nausicaa. Amidst their hospitality, Odysseus recounts his adventures with the Ciconians, the Lotus-eaters, the Cyclops, the King of the Winds, the Laestrygonians, Circe, his visit to the underworld, his escape from the Sirens, Scylla and Charybdis, and his misadventure with the Cattle of the Sun.

- D. Aided by the Phaeacians, Odysseus returns home
 - E. Once back at Ithaca, Odysseus uses his cunning, prudence, and courage to destroy the greedy nobles and regain his kingdom. He is reunited with his faithful wife and son, and divine reconciliation brings peace to Ithaca.
- IV. As a passage in the center of the *Odyssey* (Book XIII) indicates, the story of the *Odyssey* is a parable for life: a long, difficult journey, with a hope of peace at the end.
- V. The *Odyssey* also has a strong kernel of historical truth.
- A. The *Odyssey* reflects the turbulent decades of the collapse of the Bronze Age civilization in the eastern Mediterranean.
 - B. This period saw the end of the Mycenaean civilization in Greece, the fall of the Hittite Empire, the invasion of the “peoples of the sea” in Egypt, and the Exodus and conquest of Canaan by the Israelites.
- VI. For the last two hundred years, scholars have debated the “Homeric Question”: Who was Homer? Did a single great poet compose the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*? How were the poems composed? Even the Greeks of the classical period lacked reliable information about Homer.
- A. The general scholarly consensus is that the *Iliad* was composed around 750 B.C. and the *Odyssey*, around 725 B.C.
 - B. It is the doctrine of this course that both were composed by a single great creative genius, Homer.

Essential Reading:

Homer, *Odyssey*.

Supplementary Reading:

Luce, *Quest for Odysseus*.

Morford and Lenardon, *Mythology*, pp. 388–405.

Osborne, *Greece*, pp. 19–160.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that the *Odyssey* is a parable for life? What lessons would you draw from it?

2. Who is more admirable, Odysseus or Achilles? Whom would you rather have for a friend? Who would be more successful today?

Lecture Five

Lycurgus

Scope: The traditional founder of the Spartan way of life, Lycurgus (776 B.C.) was already wrapped in the shade of legend by the beginning of the historical period in Greece in the sixth century B.C. He represented one of the most characteristic figures of early Greek history: the lawgiver, a single individual who saves his country from civil war and establishes its characteristic political, social, and religious institutions. No such institutions in antiquity were as famous or significant as those of Sparta. This lecture analyzes the balanced constitution of Sparta and its social and educational institutions. It explores the purpose of these institutions and the Greek ideal of civic virtue, the willingness of the individual to subordinate his own interests to the good of the nation as a whole. The lecture concludes with an examination of Sparta's legacy and why the Founders of our country admired certain aspects of the Spartan constitution and way of life.

Outline

- I. The eighth century B.C., the time of Homer, saw the emergence of the *polis*, the Greek city-state, as the dominant political unit in the Greek world.
 - A. The city-state was a sovereign unit consisting of a walled city and surrounding territory.
 - B. There were hundreds of city-states in the Greek world, stretching from the Black Sea to Sicily, France, and even Spain.
 - C. The *polis*, or city-state, was fiercely autonomous, each with its own calendar, coins, and culture.
 - D. It rested on the principle of communal authority.
 - E. Its ultimate goal was democracy—albeit democracy in which only males had the right of citizenship, because citizenship rested on the responsibility of males to serve in the military.
 - F. The most successful and powerful of all the *polis* was Sparta. (Plato based his ideal state on certain characteristics of Sparta.)

- G.** The institutions that made Sparta so successful for almost five hundred years were attributed by the Spartans to Lycurgus.
- II.** As the traditional founder of the Spartan way of life, Lycurgus represents one of the most significant figures in the history of Greece in the eighth through sixth centuries B.C.: the lawgiver (*nomothetos*).
- A.** The two most important lawgivers of Greek city-states are Lycurgus of Sparta and Solon of Athens.
- B.** The lawgiver establishes the characteristic political, social, and religious institutions of his country.
- C.** The lawgiver is a figure known from other civilizations; Manu in India and Confucius in China are similar figures.
- III.** Already in antiquity, legend surrounded the life of Lycurgus. As Plutarch writes, “almost nothing can be said about Lycurgus, the lawgiver, that is not disputed.”
- A.** The dates of his life and birth were placed by the ancients anywhere from 1100–600 B.C. Aristotle connected Lycurgus with the founding of the Olympic games in 776 B.C. This would correspond with the story that Lycurgus met Homer.
- B.** By the time of Herodotus in the mid-fifth century B.C., the basic outline of the life and achievements of Lycurgus had emerged.
1. Sparta, before Lycurgus, was the worst governed city-state in Greece, and Lycurgus was asked to undertake its reform.
 2. Lycurgus was the uncle of the King of Sparta and acted as regent for him.
 3. He had a reputation for enormous integrity and set the model of nothing in excess and never abusing power.
 4. He set off on a series of travels to study the cultures of Crete, where Dorians had settled; Ionia; and Egypt.
 5. He then returned to Sparta to carry out reforms that rested on achieving absolute equality of all Spartans.
 6. The bane of the Greek city-state was civil war, brought about by economic and social disparity. Lycurgus sought to avoid this through his reforms.

IV. Lycurgus wanted to create a balanced constitution.

- A. In antiquity, a balanced constitution was defined as one in which a balance was achieved between the three elements essential to any good government: monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.
 - 1. Monarchy, rule by one individual, answers the need for strong unified executive authority.
 - 2. Democracy answers the need for a broad base of popular support.
 - 3. Aristocracy answers the need for the making of policy by a small group of outstanding citizens; aristocracy is literally rule by the best, as democracy is rule by the people as a whole.
- B. From the monarchical perspective, Lycurgus created a Spartan state that had two kings from separate royal families. The kings' power in domestic matters was strictly limited. But in time of war, the kings were commanders-in-chief invested with enormous power. One king acted as a check on his colleague.
- C. In terms of democracy, the Assembly of all Spartans was the ultimate sovereign; it decided all matters of war and peace. As the term was understood in antiquity, Sparta was a balanced democracy.
- D. A small aristocracy, elected by the Spartan Assembly, guided policy, particularly foreign policy.
 - 1. This was the Senate or Gerousia of Sparta, literally the Council of Old Men.
 - 2. The members were over sixty years of age and chosen for their outstanding abilities and service to Sparta.
 - 3. They served for life; the membership consisted of twenty-eight members plus the two kings.
 - 4. The Gerousia acted as a supreme court. It could declare a law passed by the Assembly as unconstitutional.
- E. Another ruling entity was formed after Lycurgus—the *Ephors*.
 - 1. Five Spartans were elected annually for a one-year term.
 - 2. They were the guardians of the rights of the people and a check on the power of the kings.
 - 3. They also enforced the Spartan way of life and its educational system.

- F. Sparta's balanced constitution was the admiration of other Greek cities and of the Founders of the United States.
- V. The Spartans understood that even the best constitution will fail unless it is vitalized by civic virtue: the willingness of the individual to subordinate his interest to the good of the community.
- A. To instill civic virtue was the goal of the educational system—the Spartan way of life—attributed to Lycurgus.
1. A Spartan newborn had first to be formally “recognized” by the five *Ephors*.
 2. Unrecognized and very sick infants were “exposed”—abandoned to die.
 3. “Recognized” infants were given a plot of land, to be worked by slaves (helots).
 4. A Spartan child was raised by his mother until the age of seven.
 5. At seven, the child began to be educated in a communal “band” of children. Every Spartan child learned to read and write.
 6. At age twelve, a Spartan boy left home and joined his “band” for further political and military education, until the age of eighteen.
 7. At eighteen, Spartan boys were sent out on a mission to prove their manhood by killing the largest helot they could find.
- B. Equality was at the center of the Spartan way of life.
1. Spartan girls were educated in the same ideals as Spartan boys. (In Athens, girls were not educated, and Athenian women lived so completely separately from the men that they even had their own dialect.)
 2. Spartans married for love. (Athenian marriages were arranged.)
 3. The concept of adultery did not exist.
 4. All Spartans owned the same amount of land.
 5. All Spartans owned a set number of helots.
 6. Personal possessions were freely shared.
 7. Spartan women were treated with utmost respect.
 8. Spartan women ran the farm and disciplined the helots.
 9. No gold or silver was permitted.
 10. Luxuries were banned.

11. There were no written laws and, hence, no lawyers.
- VI. The Spartans were the champions of liberty in Greece, admired and respected by their fellow Greeks.
- A. Their military skill and courage were certainly a reason for this admiration.
 - B. Their alliance with other Greeks (the Peloponnesian League) made them the most formidable military power in Greece.
 - C. But even more important was the Spartan success in achieving good government through the institutions of Lycurgus.

Essential Reading:

Plutarch, *Lycurgus*.

Supplementary Reading:

Cartledge, *Sparta*.

Osborne, *Greece*, pp. 161–214.

Questions to Consider:

1. The Founders of the United States, such as James Madison, were students of the classics and read Plutarch's *Life of Lycurgus* with interest. What elements in the United States Constitution recall the Spartan constitution?
2. Do you believe that the primary purpose of education in a democracy, such as Sparta or the United States, should be the inculcation of civic virtue?

Lecture Six

Solon

Scope: The emergence of democracy at Athens owed much to Solon (638–559 B.C.). He is characteristic of the Greek ideal of the true wise man who places his intellectual skills at the service of his country. Soldier, poet, statesman, Solon's impact on the political history of Athens was like that of Franklin Roosevelt in our own country. Solon carried out controversial economic, social, and political reforms to save his country from social revolution. He laid the foundation for the economic prosperity of Athens and its political leadership of the Greek world. Many of the figures of archaic Greek history are hardly more than names to us. This is not true of Solon. His poetry offers us unique insight into the values and motives of this statesman, so admired by our own Founding Fathers.

Outline

- I. The role of Solon (one of the so-called “seven wise men of Greece”) as lawgiver at Athens was comparable to that of Lycurgus at Sparta. However, the men themselves and the character and consequences of their reforms were as different as the historical Athens was from Sparta.
 - A. In antiquity, the dates of Solon's birth and death and his background were matters of controversy, but he was far more clearly anchored in history than was Lycurgus.
 - B. 594 B.C. is the date traditionally ascribed to his holding the chief magistracy at Athens (archonship) and, thus, to his political reforms. This makes a birth date of 634 B.C. reasonable.
 - C. Solon reportedly lived to an old age; it is possible, as tradition affirms, that he visited King Croesus shortly after 560 B.C.
- II. By 594 B.C., Athens, like many other Greek city-states, had become enmeshed in political chaos and economic turmoil.
 - A. In the seventh century B.C., great commercial expansion took place.

- B. Coinage was invented as a document of the power of the state to enforce a specific valuation of silver.
- C. These circumstances made it easier for people to go into debt, particularly small farmers.
- D. By 600 B.C., great gulfs existed between the rich and the poor in almost every Greek city-state, except in Sparta, where there was no commerce.
- E. Many Athenian citizens were forced to sell themselves as slaves.
- F. Because of political dissension, Athens was divided into three parties:
 - 1. The party of the plain represented wealthy landowners, who came from aristocratic families and, therefore, enjoyed full political power.
 - 2. The party of the coast represented the trading (middle) class, which did not enjoy a full share of politics.
 - 3. The party of the hill represented poor farmers, who had no political clout.

III. Solon was born of an aristocratic family, but his father had squandered the family fortune.

- A. Solon turned to trade and acquired considerable wealth.
- B. Contrary to what is sometimes said, the Athenians considered business and trade as perfectly respectable means of earning a living.
- C. Solon traveled in search of wisdom in Asia Minor.
- D. He returned to Athens a well-rounded individual, imbued with the idea that moderation in all things was a virtue.
- E. “Nothing in excess” and “Know thyself” were leitmotifs of this early Greek historical period.
- F. Solon was also a poet.
 - 1. In his time, poetry was the most common means of expressing political and other forms of wisdom.
 - 2. We possess considerable remains of his poetry, both in Plutarch’s *Life* and in Aristotle’s *Athenian Constitution*.
 - 3. Through his poetry, we have insight into Solon’s character and motives that is lacking in our assessment of many other

political figures of ancient Greece, including Themistocles, Pericles, and Alcibiades.

- IV.** Solon was concerned that no one should suffer as a result of the new constitution that he put into place; the rich would not be stripped of their wealth and the poor would not be ground under.
- A.** Solon's goals were to establish:
1. A balanced constitution for Athens;
 2. Social equality;
 3. Economic opportunity.
- B.** To achieve these goals, Solon took some unprecedented actions.
1. He abolished all debts.
 2. He abolished slavery and liberated citizens who had been sold into slavery on account of their debts—actions that provoked substantial criticism.
 3. He made it illegal to sell citizens into slavery on account of debts.
 4. He fostered the development of Athenian trade, commerce, and agriculture.
 5. He stopped the exportation of most agricultural goods (to prevent the market from rising too high).
 6. He opened up Athenian citizenship to immigrants who had a trade and were willing to swear allegiance to Athens.
 7. He replaced Athens' draconian laws (notoriously harsh laws written by Draco in 621 B.C.) with more reasonable laws.
- V.** Solon established a timocracy—a government based on wealth.
- A.** He divided Athens into political classes based on wealth.
- B.** He reserved office holding for the wealthy.
- C.** He gave every citizen the right to vote.
- D.** Every citizen could serve on a jury.
- E.** Solon gave every citizen the right to sue and encouraged doing so as a source of power and education. (Thus, Athenians became the most litigious people in the world.)
- F.** He set up a system to check the power of the Assembly of all Athenians.

1. He established a supreme court—the Areopagus—to check laws after they had been passed by the Assembly of all Athenians.
2. It was composed of ex-magistrates, who served for life. In this sense, they were indirectly elected by the people.
3. It could declare a law passed by the people as unconstitutional.
4. Solon also set up a Council of Four Hundred, chosen by lot, to prepare legislation for presentation to the Assembly.

VI. Solon introduced sumptuary legislation that limited conspicuous consumption by the wealthy.

- A. Dowries were limited.
- B. Women could not wear more than three cloaks at a time or ride in a particular kind of chariot.
- C. It was forbidden to hold excessive funerals.
- D. These reforms encouraged the rise of whistle blowers.

VII. Solon removed himself from Athenian politics after these reforms. But political strife at Athens did not come to an end.

- A. Athens would come under the rule of a benevolent dictator, Pisistratus (560–527 B.C.).
- B. However, the movement toward democracy would continue to percolate even under autocratic rule.
- C. Solon thus laid the foundation for the Athenian democracy that emerged at the end of the sixth century.

VIII. Solon's interest in scientific discovery was a reflection of the Greek intellectual and spiritual climate of the sixth century B.C.

- A. Wise men, such as Periander and Thales, were counterparts to Solon. Thales was interested in science and in finding a unifying element behind constant natural change.
- B. The gods no longer satisfied the questioning minds of such as men Xenophanes and Heraclitus, who criticized social values.
- C. Of all these sages, by far the most influential was the mysterious figure of Pythagoras.

D. Very little is known of the life of Pythagoras.

1. Traditionally, he was born in Samos c. 560 and migrated to Croton in south Italy to escape tyranny in his native land.
2. He was a follower of the religion of Orpheus, which believed in the existence of the soul and in the transmigration of souls.
3. He established a religious sect that governed the city of Croton.
4. He was forced to migrate to the south Italian city of Metapontum, where he died.
5. He was credited with numerous fundamental discoveries in arithmetic, music (harmony), and geometry (Pythagorean theorem).
6. He taught that knowledge should be sought out and shared with others as the ultimate statement of civic virtue.

Essential Reading:

Plutarch, *Solon*.

Supplementary Reading:

Aristotle, *Athenian Constitution*.

Burkert, *Ancient Pythagoreanism*.

Osborne, *Greece*, pp. 215–291.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you see parallels in Solon's social and economic reforms with those of Franklin Roosevelt?
2. Do you believe that sumptuary laws, curbing spending on luxury items, are consistent with the spirit of democracy?

Lecture Seven

Croesus

Scope: The “Father of History,” Herodotus chose to begin his great work on the Persian Wars with the tale of Croesus, King of Lydia (546 B.C.). Herodotus wrote his histories to understand what was permanent and true behind the seemingly random events of human affairs. Herodotus found this in the concept of *hybris*, the idea that the abuse of power leads to the fall of great nations and individuals. The wealth and international power and prestige of King Croesus provided Herodotus with the ideal subject to introduce the central theme of his history. Neither the oracles of the gods nor the wisdom of Solon could save Croesus from destroying himself and his country. This lecture considers the historical kernel of this story and its significance for the rise of the Persian Empire. It also considers the enduring meaning of this story and the question, still central to our own political discussions, of whether a political leader can separate public from private morality.

Outline

- I. The writing of history was born in the Athenian democracy. The first true historian was Herodotus of Halicarnassus, who came to Athens and read his *Histories* before an Athenian audience in 445 B.C.
 - A. For Herodotus, the purpose of history was moral instruction.
 1. We study history to draw lessons for our actions in the present and to plan for the future.
 2. In these terms, the study of history was an essential aspect of educating the Athenians for the awesome responsibilities of self-government in a democracy.
 - B. Herodotus carried out his researches (in Greek, *historiai*) in order to discover the laws of history: to understand what was permanent and true behind the seemingly random events of human affairs.
 - C. The theme of Herodotus’s *Histories* was the great war between the Persians and Greeks.

1. But the actual account of the wars occupies a relatively moderate amount of space in Herodotus's work.
 2. He ranges widely through many cultures and time periods.
 3. These are not the digressions of a garrulous storyteller. Herodotus's narrative is as tightly woven as the links in a chain necklace.
 4. The stories point to the central themes in the moral instruction of Herodotus.
- D. For Herodotus, one of the primary laws governing human affairs is the concept of *hybris*.
1. *Hybris* means "outrageous arrogance." It is the abuse of power of the strong toward the weak. In this sense, *hybris*, in Athenian law, was the term used for rape.
 2. The more powerful men and women become, the more likely they are to commit *hybris*. Power brings with it a kind of moral blindness (*ate*).

II. Herodotus did not begin his history of the Persian Wars with the first events of the military campaigns. He did not begin with the rise of Athens and Sparta.

- A. In fact, it is not the Greeks but the Persians who are the protagonists in the *Histories* of Herodotus.
- B. This reflects the truth of human nature that we are more willing to learn from the faults of others than from our own mistakes.
- C. Herodotus began his *Histories* with the story of King Croesus.
1. Croesus was King of Lydia (560–546 B.C.) with his capital at Sardis (modern Turkey).
 2. The wealth and power of Croesus became proverbial.
 3. Lydia was one of the four great powers of the time in the Middle East; the other powers were Babylon, Egypt, and Media (modern-day Iran).
 4. How Croesus became king is the story of Gyges and Candaules.
- D. When Solon visited Croesus, the wisdom and moderation of Solon provided the foil to the arrogant pride of Croesus.
1. Croesus asked Solon his famous question: "Who is the happiest man in the world?"

2. To which Solon responded: Tellus the Athenian, and Cleobis and Biton.
 3. The lesson to be learned from the stories of Tellus and Cleobis and Biton is that they died at the height of their pride and fame, before life could pull them down.
 4. Croesus dismissed Solon as an overrated fool.
- E. Croesus had a dream that his favorite son would be killed by an iron weapon.
1. The Greeks took dreams seriously.
 2. Croesus took extreme precautions to protect his son from physical harm but to no avail. His son was ultimately killed by an iron spear.
- F. The Greeks also took oracles very seriously.
1. Croesus believed the oracle of Apollo at Delphi was the most credible of all the oracles.
 2. He made huge offerings of wealth to this oracle, as if he could buy the gods—a clear manifestation of *hybris* on the part of Croesus.
- G. Croesus interpreted two statements by the Oracle of Apollo at Delphi to mean that he should make a pre-emptive strike against Cyrus, the new King of Persia.
1. Apollo said that if Croesus attacked Cyrus, a great empire would be destroyed.
 2. Apollo promised Croesus that he would remain King of Lydia until a mule sat on the throne of Persia.
 3. Neither side won.
 4. Croesus returned to Sardis.
 5. Cyrus brought his army to Sardis and captured the city (546 B.C.).
 6. Cyrus tried to have Croesus burned alive.
 7. Croesus asked Apollo to save him and a rainstorm put out the fire.
 8. Croesus impressed Cyrus with the wisdom he had learned from Solon, who taught that no one can judge himself happy until his final hours are known.
- H. Through the story of Croesus, Herodotus warns against *hybris*, the vice of pride and excess.

- III.** For Herodotus, Croesus and the Lydians also served to introduce central themes of his history, which were:
- A.** The superiority of Greeks to “barbarians”;
 - B.** The importance of freedom: Croesus was the first to rob the Greeks (in Asia Minor) of their freedom. This was an act of *hybris* for which he was punished.
 - C.** The relationship between public and private morality:
 - 1.** Herodotus’s *Histories* begin with an act of private immorality by the King of Lydia (Candaules).
 - 2.** This act of private immorality ultimately leads to the downfall of the Lydians.
 - 3.** For Herodotus, there can be no separation of public from private morality.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, *Histories*, Book I.

Supplementary Reading:

Luce, *Greek Historians*, pp. 1–59.

Questions to Consider:

- 1.** Do you believe that we can or should separate private from public morality?
- 2.** Do you believe that the primary purpose of history is moral instruction?

Lecture Eight

Xerxes

Scope: Both Plutarch and Herodotus understood that we frequently learn most about our own history by studying that of other nations. Both would have agreed that the Persian King Xerxes (519–465 B.C.) belongs in any course on famous Greeks. Xerxes is the central figure in Herodotus's *Histories*. His actions and character were responsible for the fall of his country from greatness; by studying the folly of Xerxes, Herodotus hoped that the Greeks could avoid the same mistakes and maintain their freedom and power. This lecture examines Xerxes as the model of the despotic ruler, a type still to be found in every walk of life. The lecture looks beyond the stories of history and presents the realities of Xerxes and the Persian Empire over which he ruled.

Outline

- I. Herodotus and Plutarch both understood that mistakes can be more instructive than successes. We can sometimes learn more about leadership from the examples of incompetent leaders than from successful individuals. If this is true, Xerxes must be one of the most instructive figures in history. Xerxes inherited an empire at the height of its power and led it on path of unalterable decline.
- II. Herodotus continues his history with the story of Astyages, King of the Medes, who committed *hybris*.
 - A. King Astyages abused his power by brutally killing an innocent child in an act of revenge.
 - B. Through moral blindness (*ate*) Astyages failed to protect himself against his enemies and ultimately lost his kingdom to the Persians, under Cyrus.
 - C. Cyrus was the mule spoken of by the oracle of Apollo.
 - 1. A mule is the offspring of a noble animal (horse) and a common one (ass).
 - 2. Cyrus was the offspring of a noble (Median) mother and a common (Persian) father.

- III.** Cyrus, in the pages of Herodotus, became the model of a good king.
- A.** He avoided *hybris*, the crime of outrageous arrogance, when he conquered Croesus.
 - B.** He built a unified, multicultural, diverse, and strong kingdom.
- IV.** Darius, the father of Xerxes, was largely responsible for the administrative structure of the Persian Empire (522–486 B.C.).
- A.** Darius was descended from a collateral branch of the family through Cyrus.
 - B.** He made Persia a superpower, roughly the size of the continental United States, reaching from the First Cataract of the Nile River in Egypt to the Indus River.
 - C.** Persia was the first empire in history that rested on the ideal of giving benefits to the emperor's subjects.
 - D.** It was a wealthy empire.
 - 1.** The Persian king levied an annual tax on all the provinces (*satrapies*) of the empire.
 - 2.** In addition, each province was required to pay for the upkeep of the Persian armies and administrative staff stationed in the province.
 - 3.** The Persian treasury had an enormous surplus.
 - E.** It possessed a superb professional army.
 - 1.** Persians and Medes formed the core of the army, but the king drew contingents from all over the empire.
 - 2.** In contrast to Greek armies, the Persians were especially strong in cavalry forces.
 - F.** It was an empire that tolerated other cultures.
 - 1.** Cyrus rebuilt the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem.
 - 2.** Jewish mercenaries served with great distinction in the armies of the Persian kings.
 - G.** It was well administered, with an excellent system of communications.
 - 1.** The Persian royal roads connected the major cities of the empire.
 - 2.** Of the royal courier service, it was said “neither rain, nor snow, nor gloom of night can keep these couriers from their appointed routes.”

- H. Darius believed he had been chosen to be emperor by the one true god.
 - 1. He followed the religion of Zarathustra (Zoroaster, sixth century B.C.). Zarathustra taught that there was one true god, Ahura Mazda (Lord of Truth), who demanded righteousness and an ethical life from those who followed “the truth.”
 - 2. Because he believed he was divinely chosen, Darius crushed all rebellions against him.
 - 3. He suffered his first defeat at the Battle of Marathon in 490 B.C.
 - 4. Before he could avenge himself, he died in 486 B.C., and the throne passed to his son, Xerxes.
- V. For Herodotus, Xerxes is the prototype of the despot.
 - A. One of Herodotus’s main themes is the struggle of freedom against tyranny and what it means to be the slave of a despot.
 - B. Through Xerxes, Herodotus reveals the capriciousness and *hybris* of a despot.
 - C. The goal of Xerxes was the conquest of all Greece.
 - D. His forces came from all parts of his empire to assemble at Sardis.
 - E. Herodotus numbered the land forces at 1,700,000 fighting men and 5,000,000 troops in total.
 - 1. These figures are regarded by scholars as incredible.
 - 2. However, it is possible that the infantry forces of Xerxes numbered 500,000 fighting men.
 - 3. The Persian fleet numbered 1,207 ships (*triremes*).
 - 4. The naval forces were on the cutting edge of the technology of the time.
 - F. Herodotus interrupts his narrative of the Persian attack on the Greeks to offer another illustration of life under a despot and of *hybris* in the story of Pythius: Under a despot, no man or woman is safe; wealth, high position, doing the greatest favors for the despot—none of these can protect you from the arbitrary wrath of the tyrant.
 - G. Xerxes strategies were well conceived.
 - 1. He marched his army along the coast, keeping it close to his fleet.

2. He dug a canal through Mount Athos so that his fleet could stay as close as possible to his army; thus, he even bent nature to his will.
 3. He lashed boats together so that he could cross the Hellespont from Asia into Europe.
- H. When a storm wrecked the bridge, however, Xerxes beat the waters with a whip and executed his engineers in his rage.
- I. Xerxes won over one ally after another.
1. Only thirty-one cities on the Greek mainland resisted Xerxes.
 2. Many of the rest sent him symbols of submission: earth and water.
- J. He finally arrived at the hot springs of Thermopylae, where he found three hundred Spartans awaiting him.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, *Histories*, Books VII–IX.

Supplementary Reading:

Osborne, *Greece*, pp. 292–355.

Questions to Consider:

1. Plato and Aristotle believed that the “tyrant” was a well-defined and real human character. Do you agree? How does Xerxes fit this definition?
2. Can you give other historical examples of a great expeditionary force being defeated by a seemingly much weaker opponent? Is there anything instructive about this in Herodotus’s account of the defeat of Xerxes?

Lecture Nine

Leonidas

Scope: The valor of King Leonidas (529–480 B.C.) and his three hundred Spartans is one of the most stirring tales in the annals of military history. It also provides an ideal introduction to the nature of warfare in classical Greece. The Persian invasion of Greece in 480 B.C. was a seminal event in the history of Greece and in world history. This lecture analyzes the historical accounts of Xerxes's expedition against Greece in the framework of a critical discussion of the actual resources of the Persian Empire. It considers Persian and Greek tactics and strategy and contrasts the nature of military leadership in the Persian autocracy with that of the democratic Greek city-state. The Battle of Thermopylae (480 B.C.) is the focus of the lecture. What determined the tactics of the Spartans and the Persians? Was the Spartan stand really an act of desperate valor or a well considered strategic decision that played a major role in the ultimate victory of the Greeks?

Outline

- I.** The goal of Xerxes was the absolute subjection of Greece.
 - A.** The freedom of the Greeks on the mainland was a beacon to the Greeks under the rule of Xerxes, making them dream of independence.
 - B.** Like other despots in history, such as Hitler, Xerxes believed his empire must continue to expand, or it would begin to decline.
 - C.** Xerxes also wanted to conquer Greece, simply because it was there.
 - D.** His plan was carefully wrought.
 - E.** He made an alliance with Carthage in the western Mediterranean. The Carthaginians were to attack Sicily to prevent the possibility of Sicilian Greeks sending aid to the Greeks of the mainland.
 - F.** His army consisted of 500,000 troops, regarded as the best professional soldiers of their day.

- II. The Greeks, by contrast, were badly disunited.
 - A. Of the hundreds of Greek city-states, only thirty-one allied to fight the Persians.
 - B. Sparta assumed the leadership of this resistance at the request of the other cities.
- III. As a result of the constitution of Lycurgus, Sparta was recognized as the leading nation in the Greek world at the time of Xerxes's invasion.
 - A. This recognition rested on the reputation of the Spartans as the best infantrymen (*hoplites*) in the Greek world.
 - B. It rested also on the moral authority of Sparta.
 - 1. Sparta had a reputation for justice.
 - 2. In the sixth century, Sparta liberated various Greek cities, including Athens, from tyrants and won for Sparta the reputation as the champion of liberty.
 - C. Sparta's position as the dominant power in the Greek world can also be attributed to the size and excellence of the military forces that Sparta could put into the field as a result of her leadership of the Peloponnesian League.
 - 1. By 500 B.C., Sparta was the head of an alliance of Greek city-states in the Peloponnese.
 - 2. Members included such major cities as Corinth, Sicyon, and Megara.
 - 3. The member states of the Peloponnesian League were united in an offensive and defensive alliance.
 - 4. Members swore to have the same friends and enemies as the Spartans and to follow Spartan leadership.
 - 5. Each state had one vote in the assembly. A majority vote of the assembly was necessary to implement any joint policy.
 - 6. Once war was declared, each state was required to send a contingent of troops to serve under Spartan command.
 - 7. The Peloponnesian League could put upward of 60,000 men into the field. It was a most formidable power in terms of the Greek world.
 - 8. The other pole of this struggle against Persia, Athens, willingly accepted the leadership of Sparta to turn back the Persian tide.

- IV.** Persian strategy in the spring and summer of 480 B.C. was based on overwhelming superiority in numbers and winning over in alliance as many Greek city-states as possible.
- A.** This was highly successful. The Persians were joined by the king of Macedonia, by the Greek cities of Thessaly (which had the best cavalry in Greece), and the Boeotians cities, led by Thebes (with some of the best infantry in Greece).
 - B.** Making use of his enormous numerical superiority and maintaining close coordination between his naval and land forces, Xerxes intended to move systematically from north to south in Greece, crushing all opposition.
- V.** Greek strategy was focused on defending the Corinthian isthmus.
- A.** The oracle of Apollo at Delphi, a major center of moral authority and Greek unity, was so discouraging as to suggest that Delphi was pro-Persian.
 - B.** The main thrust of Spartan strategy was to build a strong fortification across the narrow isthmus (one and a half miles wide) joining the Peloponnesian peninsula to the rest of Greece.
 - 1.** The plan was to stop the Persians at the isthmus.
 - 2.** This strategy left Athens undefended.
- VI.** For the Greeks, war was the supreme test of civic virtue
- A.** Citizenship is based on military service.
 - B.** Every citizen, up to age forty-five, was obliged to do military service.
 - C.** The infantry was all important; training began in boyhood.
 - D.** The *hoplite* (heavily armed infantryman) was the core of the Greek fighting force.
 - E.** The *hoplite's* equipment consisted of a helmet (weighing about four and a half pounds), a heavy metal breastplate, metal shinguards (greaves), a shield of wood and iron (weighing around thirty pounds), a spear (around seven and a half feet long—the primary offensive weapon), and a sword (two and a half to three feet long). The total equipment worn in battle by a Greek *hoplite* weighed seventy-five pounds.

- F. The infantry fought hand-to-hand combat in a tightly knit, self-protective phalanx that was the essence of their combat strategy.

VII. The Persians had professional soldiers.

- A. The best Persian soldiers were the Medes and the Persians, and the best of these were the royal bodyguard (Immortals).
- B. The Persian infantryman was more lightly armored: a wicker shield, lighter spear, and linen breastplate.
- C. However, in addition to sword and spear, the Persian infantryman used bow and arrow.
- D. The Persians also had a superb cavalry.
 - 1. This superiority in cavalry was why the Greeks were so reluctant to meet the Persians in open-field battle.
 - 2. The topography of Thermopylae, however, negated this advantage.

VIII. The Battle of Thermopylae was waged August 19–21, 480 B.C.

- A. Under the leadership of the Spartan King Leonidas, a force of 7,000 troops from the Peloponnese, including 300 Spartans, occupied the pass at Thermopylae.
- B. This is the main land route from northern into central and southern Greece.
 - 1. Between the mountains and the sea, the pass is at points only fifty feet wide.
 - 2. The Spartan defense was aided by a preexisting fortification.
- C. For two days, the Spartans and their allies led a heroic defense, inflicting heavy casualties on the Persians, who were unable to use their arrows to good effect in such a close context.
- D. A local informant, a Greek named Ephialtes, showed the Persians an alternative route, turning the Spartan flank.
- E. Leonidas sent the allies back home; but with his three hundred Spartans and volunteers from the city of Thespis, he defended the pass to the last man.
- F. The death in battle of three hundred Spartans was an extraordinarily serious blow to Spartan manpower. In terms of relative populations, this would be the same as if the United States lost 1,875,000 men in a single battle.

- G.** Today a statue of Leonidas holding the pass stands in his honor; in antiquity, a stone lion, marking the place where Leonidas and his Spartans had fallen, was inscribed: “Go tell the Spartans, Oh stranger, that we lie here, true to the death, to our Spartan way of life.”

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, *Histories*, Book VII.

Supplementary Reading:

Lazenby, *Defence of Greece*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that Thermopylae was a desperate gamble by the Spartans or did it make sense, strategically and tactically?
2. What do we mean when we say that Leonidas was a superb battlefield commander?

Lecture Ten

Themistocles

Scope: The most powerful historical mind of the Greek world, Thucydides, paid tribute to Themistocles (527–460 B.C.) as perhaps the greatest statesman in Greek history. From a modest background, Themistocles rose to a position of leadership in one of the most critical moments in his country's history. He was ambitious, ruthless, and avaricious. But he possessed what Thucydides regarded as the supreme quality of a statesman: foresight. Themistocles used the great challenge of the Persian invasion to lay the foundation for his nation's political greatness. Themistocles made Athens the supreme naval power in its world. This lecture examines in detail the Battle of Salamis (480 B.C.) and shows why it must be counted among the most decisive battles in world history.

Outline

- I. The battle of Thermopylae cost Xerxes some 20,000 men and demoralized the rest of his army. Nevertheless, because of their victory and the pro-Persian ("Medizing") policy of Thebes, the territory of Athens (Attica) lay directly in the line of the Persian advance.
 - A. Sparta and the Peloponnesian League rightly felt that any attempt at fighting the Persians in the open field was doomed to failure because of the size of the Persian army and its superiority in cavalry.
 - B. The Spartans advised the Athenians to abandon their city and seek refuge in the Peloponnese, which could be defended by the fortifications at the Isthmus of Corinth.
 - C. The oracle of Apollo at Delphi urged the Athenians to flee their city, prophesizing almost total destruction: "Only the wooden walls will survive."
 - D. This situation of Athens in September 480 B.C. was as desperate as that of Britain in 1940. As the British found in Winston Churchill a leader worthy of the challenge, so the Athenians found such a man in Themistocles, son of Neocles.

- II.** Themistocles was a superb politician.
- A.** He was born in modest circumstances.
 - B.** His mother was a foreigner.
 - C.** He fought in the ranks at Marathon.
 - D.** He was ambitious and jealous of the fame that Miltiades won at Marathon.
 - E.** The historian Thucydides, perhaps the finest political mind of antiquity, paid the highest of tributes to Themistocles.
 - 1.** “He was the most capable of statesmen. His intellect was such that he could, with brief preparation, understand an issue and solve it in a manner that was best for the present situation and for the long term consequences.”
 - 2.** Themistocles thus possessed foresight, the most important quality of a successful political leader.
 - F.** A patriot, he had a vision of Athens as the leading power in the Greek world.
 - G.** But he was also financially unscrupulous; he made a fortune by taking bribes and involving himself in other dubious transactions.
 - H.** Given the predominance of Spartan military forces on land, Themistocles understood that Athens could become the leader only by achieving naval supremacy.
- III.** In the years after Marathon and before the invasion of Xerxes (490–480 B.C.), Themistocles understood the threat of a Persian invasion and the opportunity such an invasion would present to Athens.
- A.** In 483 B.C., Themistocles convinced the Athenians to use a windfall in public revenue to build warships.
 - B.** One hundred talents from a newly discovered vein of silver in Attica were used to build one hundred triremes, which formed the core of the Athenian fleet at the time of Xerxes’s invasion.
 - C.** This gave Athens the largest and best navy in the Greek world, with two hundred triremes.
 - D.** The Greek trireme was the cruise missile of the ancient world in the sense that it was the cutting edge of military technology.
 - 1.** *Trireme* is Latin for “three-oared.”

2. Scholarly debate over what a trireme looked like was resolved in 1987 by reconstructing a trireme and putting it into action.
 3. The trireme had three banks of rowers per side, each superimposed on the others.
 4. In battle, rowing was the means of propelling a trireme.
 5. The trireme used sails for longer voyages.
 6. The trireme carried a crew of 200: 170 rowers, generally 14–20 marines, and a captain, second mate, and extra crew members.
 7. The trireme was 120 feet long and 18 feet wide.
- E. The reconstructed trireme proves the accuracy of classical accounts concerning its capabilities.
1. It could maintain a speed of 11 miles per hour.
 2. It could accelerate from 0 to 8 miles per hour in 30 seconds.
 3. It could make a 180-degree turn in 60 seconds.
 4. It could travel 184 miles in 24 hours.
- F. The trireme's main offensive weapon was a heavy bronze ram attached to the prow.
1. It could ram and sink an enemy ship.
 2. It could ram and board an enemy ship with marines.
 3. It could disable an enemy ship by shearing off its oars on one side.
- G. The Persians had 1,207 triremes, and the Greek fleet, as a whole, had 387.
- IV. At the time of Thermopylae, the Greek fleet tested the Persian fleet at the Battle of Artemisium, a battle neither side won.
- A. Themistocles convinced the allied fleet, commanded by the Spartan Eurybiades, to force a fight with the Persian fleet in the Bay of Salamis, off the coast of Athens.
- B. Themistocles convinced the Athenians that their ships were “the wooden walls” referred to by the Oracle at Delphi and that the ships were divinely intended to be the salvation of Athens. The Athenians thus trusted to their ships and abandoned their city, which was captured and burned by Xerxes.
- C. To provoke the Greek fleet into action, Themistocles persuaded the Persians to form a blockade on both sides of the island of Salamis.

- D. Against the advice of some of his best counselors, Xerxes accepted the challenge and attacked the Greek fleet at Salamis on September 23, 480 B.C.
 - E. The Persian fleet was so large that the whole fleet could not be used at the same time but was forced to row in rank upon rank.
 - F. For the Greek ships, an important offensive technique was to ram the enemy ships with their metal prows.
 - G. Another Greek strategy was to cut off the enemy's oars.
 - H. The Greek sailors could swim, but the Persian sailors could not.
 - I. Thus, the strategy of Themistocles led to a complete and conclusive Greek victory.
- V. Xerxes returned to Persia, leaving behind a demoralized army of 300,000 men under his general Mardonius.
- A. The Persians should never have fought the Battle of Salamis. For them, it was unnecessary, the wrong battle fought at the wrong time.
 - B. The only person to advise Xerxes not to fight at Salamis was Artemisia, Queen of Caria, but her advice was discounted because she was a woman.
- VI. Salamis marked the high point of Themistocles's life.
- A. He was honored by the Spartans and recognized by the other Greeks as the preeminent statesman of the moment.
 - B. Themistocles embodied the resolute spirit of the Athenians that led them in the winter of 480/479 B.C. to reject a generous offer of peace, alliance, and monetary restitution by Xerxes.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, *Histories*, Book VIII.

Plutarch, *Themistocles*.

Supplementary Reading:

Green, *Greco-Persian Wars*.

Morrison and Coates, *Athenian Trireme*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that Salamis could be compared with the Battle of Midway as one of the most decisive naval battles in history?
2. Given the case of Themistocles, do you believe that a great leader needs to be honest?

Lecture Eleven

Pausanias

Scope: Thucydides regarded the Spartan King Pausanias (510–476 B.C.), along with Themistocles, as one of the two preeminent Greek leaders of the age of the Persian Wars. The Battle of Plataea (479 B.C.) ended the threat of a Persian conquest of Greece. In leading the Greeks to victory, Pausanias proved himself to be one of the best generals in history, a master of tactics and strategy and a superb battlefield commander. Pausanias also sponsored the Greek expedition to Mycale to liberate Greeks in Asia Minor. In concluding his history of the Persian Wars, Herodotus gives reasons for the Greek victory over the Persians and issues another warning against the disastrous consequences of *hybris*.

Outline

- I. After the Battle of Salamis, Xerxes retreated to Asia, taking a portion of the army with him.
 - A. Crack troops numbering 300,000 remained in Greece under General Mardonius, a strong advocate of the expedition against Greece.
 - B. In the winter of 480–479 B.C., the Athenians expected the Spartans to send a force to protect them. They did not.
 - C. Spartan delay had enabled the Persians to invade Athenian territory and ravage the lands and city of Athens a second time.
- II. It was only in the summer of 479 B.C. that the Spartan army under Pausanias joined forces with the Athenians and marched to engage the Persian army, which had spent the winter in the friendly territory of Boeotia (Thebes).
 - A. The Spartan-led army consisted of contingents from the thirty-one allied Greek cities. These included members of the Peloponnesian League, such as Corinth, Megara, and Sicyon, and troops from Athens and other Greek cities, including Plataea.
 - B. This army numbered 100,000 men, the largest army in classical Greek history.

- C. Plataea was an independent city in Boeotia, with a long tradition of hatred for Thebes and of friendship for Athens. Troops from Plataea fought on the side of Athens at the Battle of Marathon.
- D. The Greek army was led by Pausanias.
 - 1. Pausanias was the son of the Spartan King Cleombrotus and the nephew of Leonidas, the hero of Thermopylae.
 - 2. After Leonidas's death in battle, his infant son, Pleistarchus, became king.
 - 3. Pausanias served as regent and in that position, commanded the Spartan land forces in 479 B.C.
 - 4. Pausanias also had the responsibility of keeping the diverse and quarrelsome group of Greek cities together.
 - 5. The other Spartan king, Leotychides, commanded the allied fleet.
- E. The Persian forces numbered 300,000 men, commanded by experienced generals, including Mardonius, Artabazus, and the cavalry commander Masistius.

III. The brilliance of Pausanias as a battlefield commander and the courage and skill of the Greek troops led to complete Greek victory and destruction of the Persian army.

- A. At the start of the battle of Plataea (August 27, 479 B.C.), the Persians were across the Asopus River, behind fortifications, while the Greeks occupied the hills, blocking roads from Athens to Thebes.
- B. Because of a lack of water, however, the Greeks were forced to abandon the hills and take positions nearer the river and town of Plataea.
- C. The Persians captured the road between Athens and Thebes and cut off Greek supplies.
- D. The Persians also fouled Greek water supplies.
- E. Lacking food and water, Pausanias decided to carry out a night retreat back to the hills.
- F. The difficulty of carrying out such a maneuver led to a dislocation of the Greek line. One squadron of Spartans refused to retreat.
- G. The Persians launched an assault.

- H. The Spartans waited to counter the Persian attack until their soothsayer approved it.
 - I. When they finally did attack, the Spartans and the Greek allies broke the Persian lines and annihilated the Persian army—reputedly 257,000 men.
- IV. The Greeks believed that Plataea was a war for freedom, the independence of the Greek city-states.
- A. Under Spartan leadership, the Greek allies were so confident of victory that before Plataea, they were planning an offensive war against Persia with the object of liberating the Greek cities of Asia Minor.
 - B. Thus, before Plataea, the allied Greek fleet was assembled at the island of Delos.
 - C. When word arrived of the victory at Plataea, the Greek fleet immediately sailed for Mycale on the coast of Asia Minor.
 - D. An amphibious landing of Greek troops in the late summer of 479 B.C. won a complete victory over a Persian army of 60,000.
 - E. Mycale followed so closely after Plataea that it gave rise to a story that the battles were fought on the same day.
 - F. The Greek victory at Mycale sparked a general uprising of Greeks against Persian rule.
 - G. The decline of the Persian Empire began with the defeat at Plataea.
- V. The Greek victory over Persia was total. Why did the Greeks win the Persian Wars?
- A. The Greeks understood, as a modern historian does, that the Persian mistakes were the primary cause for the defeat.
 - 1. The Battle of Salamis should never have been fought.
 - 2. Troops should have been landed at various points throughout the Peloponnese.
 - 3. Xerxes should not have gone home after Salamis.
 - B. The Greeks also believed that they won because they were free men fighting the slaves of a tyrant. This was also the view of Herodotus.

- C. But Herodotus sought a deeper cause: that the gods had punished Xerxes for his *hybris*. This was the view that Aeschylus presented to an Athenian audience in his play *The Persians* (472 B.C.).

VI. Herodotus ends his history with the campaign that followed Platea and Mycale.

- A. After the battles of Platea and Mycale, the allied forces stayed on. The Spartans thought the Greeks from Asia Minor should be given land on mainland Greece from cities that had supported the Persians.
- B. But the Athenians insisted that a war of liberation should be waged, beginning with their occupation of the port of Sestos.
- C. Herodotus makes a digression at this point in his history to tell yet another story about the *hybris* of Xerxes, to make the point that the whims and weakness of a tyrant make victims of the most innocent of people, even members of his own family.
 - 1. Herodotus had a moral lesson for his audience, the Athenians, to whom he narrated his history in 445 B.C.
 - 2. At that point, the Athenians ruled over an empire that included the Greek city-states in Asia Minor.
- D. After Platea and Mycale, the Spartans were reluctant to accept the leadership of a revolt of the Greek cities of Asia Minor.
- E. They feared that imperial power would corrupt the Spartan way of life and returned to Sparta.
- F. The Athenians, however, went on to capture the city of Sestos in the winter of 479–478 B.C. Their punishment of the captured Persian commander of Sestos was an act of *hybris*.

VII. Herodotus ends his history with the suggestion to his Athenian audience that Athens should not attempt to expand its empire, lest it should fall prey to *hybris*.

Essential Reading:

Herodotus, *Histories*, Book IX.

Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, Book I, pp. 128–134.

Supplementary Reading:

Green, *Greco-Persian War*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How did Persian strategic mistakes contribute to the Persians' defeat?
2. Compare Pausanias and Xerxes as battlefield commanders.

Lecture Twelve

Pericles

Scope: Along with Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill, Pericles (490–429 B.C.) ranks as one of the three greatest democratic statesmen in history. He so embodied the leading currents of his day that his name came to stand for an entire era: the Periclean Age. His powerful mind and wide-ranging interests enabled him to guide Athens to a position of preeminence as the intellectual and artistic center of the world and to create a legacy that endures to our own day. This lecture focuses on a critical moment in the life of Pericles and in the history of Athens: his decision to lead his country into the great war with Sparta. Our lecture on Pericles is one of four devoted to leading figures in the culture and society of Athens in the Periclean Age. Together, they present a composite portrait of Pericles that is quite different from that drawn in conventional histories.

Outline

- I. In 478 B.C., Pausanias sponsored the revolt of the Greek cities of Asia Minor.
 - A. After one season of campaigning, the Spartans became suspicious of his goals.
 - B. He was believed to have been conspiring with the Persian king.
 - C. He was brought home and ultimately committed suicide.
 - D. The Spartans interpreted these events to mean that they should avoid the excesses of empire.
- II. The Greeks continued their campaign of liberation under Themistocles.
 - A. The Athenians were eager to accept his guidance that they should assume the leadership of the Ionian Greeks in the absence of Spartan leadership.
 - B. By 478–477 B.C., the Athenians had formed an alliance of Greek cities that would ultimately grow to 243 city-states and become a great naval empire.

- C. The allies would come to call it a tyranny exercised by the Athenians over their fellow Greeks.
- D. Within a few years, the Athenians became weary of Themistocles's constant reminders of all his achievements and they ostracized him. (Ostracism was voted on every year at the Assembly of all Athenian citizens.)
- E. Exiled, Themistocles went to the court of the Persian king and lived out his life in Persia as an honored, and wealthy, adviser to the king.

III. Pericles was the leading statesman of the Athenian democracy from 462 until his death in 429 B.C.

- A. Pericles has been ranked with Abraham Lincoln and Winston Churchill as one of the three greatest democratic statesmen in history.
- B. As portrayed by his admirer, the historian Thucydides, Pericles possessed the essential qualities of a great statesman:
 - 1. A bedrock of principles;
 - 2. A moral compass;
 - 3. A vision;
 - 4. The ability to build a consensus among his fellow citizens to achieve this vision.
- C. Pericles was a scion of one of the most distinguished Athenian families—the Alcmaeonid.
 - 1. He was an aristocrat.
 - 2. He was wealthy.
 - 3. He was well educated.
- D. In 462 B.C., he was a leading figure in the establishment of the radical democracy at Athens.
- E. According to Thucydides, Pericles did not curry favor with the Athenian people.
 - 1. He led by moral authority rather than following opinion polls.
 - 2. He led the Athenians by his logical reasoning.

IV. It was the vision of Pericles to make Athens the number-one power in the Greek world, the political, economic, intellectual, and artistic center of Greece: the model for Greece.

- A. As a statesman, Pericles took bold steps to ensure that the will of the people would be sovereign.
 - 1. In 462–461 B.C., Pericles led a movement to abolish the Aeropagus.
 - 2. Judgments of the court of the people could not be appealed.
 - 3. All offices were filled by lottery. This was the ultimate statement of faith in the ordinary citizen—any Athenian could hold any public office.
 - 4. Almost all offices were held for one year, and they were filled by committees.
- B. Pericles felt that subjects of the Athenian Empire should be proud to pay tribute to Athens.
- C. He spoke values for the Athenians that reflect modern-day values in the United States:
 - 1. Government of the people, for the people, and by the people;
 - 2. Economic opportunity and a free market system;
 - 3. Equality of opportunity;
 - 4. Equality before the law.
- V. Pericles was convinced that Athens could become the leading power in Greece only by defeating Sparta. Other Athenian politicians believed a balance of power between Athens and Sparta was beneficial for both. Pericles rejected this idea of coexistence.
 - A. By 431 B.C., Pericles was about to achieve his goal of a war to the end between Athens and Sparta.
 - B. The 446 B.C. treaty between Athens and Sparta effectively divided Greece into two great camps: Athens and its allies; Sparta and its Peloponnesian allies, including Corinth, which had competed economically with Athens since the time of the Persian Wars, and some neutral cities.
 - C. The fifty years between the end of the Persian Wars and the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.) was a period of constant tension and bursts of armed conflict between Athens and Sparta.
 - D. The political disturbance that precipitated the Peloponnesian War, which would engulf the entire Greek world, was a civil war in Epidamnus that drew Corinth and Corcyra into war with each other.

- E. Corcyra became an ally of Athens; Corinth sided with Sparta.
 - F. Sparta was well aware that Pericles was the leader of the war party at Athens.
 - G. A Spartan request that the Athenians drive out the “pollution”—meaning Pericles—failed and only increased the influence of Pericles among the Athenians.
- VI.** Pericles convinced the Athenians that war with Sparta was inevitable.
- A. Pericles suggested that Sparta had long been plotting against Athens.
 - B. He advocated a war by sea, believing the Spartans to be weak in naval power.
 - C. He pointed out that Athens had a large surplus in its budget. The annual tribute paid by the allies amounted to six hundred talents, an enormous amount of money in relative terms.
 - D. At the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War, Pericles convinced Athenian farmers to seek safety within the walls of Athens, as the Spartans ravaged their lands.
- VII.** In the winter of 431–430 B.C., Pericles gave his famous funeral oration over the bodies of slain Athenians.
- A. He used the occasion to remind his fellow Athenians of the ideals for which they were fighting.
 - B. He spoke of Athens as a model for the world.
 - C. But he also talked about mistakes.
- VIII.** Thucydides, in his history, immediately follows his description of Pericles’s funeral oration with an account of the outbreak of plague in Athens.
- A. Thucydides describes the physical symptoms of the plague and its demoralizing impact on Athenians.
 - B. It is possible that as much as twenty-five percent of the population of Athens died in the plague.
 - C. Pericles maintained that, despite the plague, it was necessary to continue the war.
 - D. Pericles succumbed to the plague himself and died in 429 B.C.

- E. For Thucydides Pericles's death was a disaster for the Athenians, because he was succeeded by mediocre leaders.
- IX. Modern historians tend to follow Thucydides and to regard Pericles as a secular saint, incorruptible, a man of vision.
- A. Plutarch gave the view of some of Pericles's contemporaries. They regarded Pericles as a demagogue, who began the Peloponnesian War to divert the Athenians from his personal and political problems.
 - B. However, Pericles's achievements are undeniable: He made Athens the centerpiece of an age of intellectual creativity that would forever define our notion of great literature, great art, and great thought.

Essential Reading:

Plutarch, *Pericles*.

Thucydides, *Peloponnesian War*, Books I–II.

Supplementary Reading:

Kagan, *Pericles*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What would be your list of the qualities that a great statesman must possess?
2. Epidamnus, Sarajevo, Kosovo: What similarities and differences do you see in the events of 435–431 B.C., 1914, and 1999?

Lecture Thirteen

Anaxagoras, Phidias, and Aspasia

Scope: The names of Anaxagoras, Phidias, and Aspasia (fifth century B.C.) represent the leading intellectual, artistic, and cultural currents in an age of unsurpassed creativity. Anaxagoras was as one of the sophists, professors, who made Athens the intellectual center of the Greek world. He taught that reason is the motivating force of the universe. Phidias was an artist who sought to express, in his design for the Acropolis at Athens and in his sculptures, the ideal of divine and human reason. In a society that denied rights to women, Aspasia, the mistress of Pericles, combined a career as a madam of a bordello with intellectual attainments that made her a political adviser to Pericles. All three were friends of Pericles; all became targets of legal attacks by his enemies.

Outline

- I.** The Athenian democracy of the fifth century B.C. was one of the most creative epochs in human history, ranking with the scientific and technological revolution of our own day.
 - A.** The economic opportunity and intellectual freedom of fifth-century Athens attracted the finest minds from all over the Greek world.
 - 1.** The sophists (professors) were the leaders of this intellectual revolution.
 - 2.** They were teachers, who charged large fees to educate the youth of Athens.
 - 3.** They taught the art of persuasion, rhetoric, the key to political success at Athens.
 - 4.** They challenged all conventional values.
 - 5.** They taught that man is the measure of all things.
 - 6.** They were skeptical about the existence of gods.
 - B.** Art and architecture underwent a revolution in the generation after the end of the Persian Wars, developing forms and styles that would forever define the term “classical.”

- II.** Pericles shared in the intellectual excitement of this period; three of his close associates were among the brightest lights in this intellectual galaxy: Anaxagoras, Phidias, and Aspasia.
- III.** Anaxagoras (500–428 B.C.) taught that reason (*nous*) ruled the world.
- A.** Anaxagoras was born in Clazomenae, a Greek city in Asia Minor and a subject city of the Athenian Empire.
 - B.** Anaxagoras settled in Athens and became the close friend of Pericles
 - C.** Anaxagoras taught that the fundamental principle of the universe is *nous* (mind or reason).
 - 1.** All things have come into being through reason.
 - 2.** This reason is pure thought, unmixed with any other substance and capable of ordering and controlling all things.
 - D.** Anaxagoras was credited with having a great influence on Pericles.
 - 1.** He taught Pericles to ignore superstition and divine explanations for events and phenomena. Anaxagoras taught that the sun was not a divine being but a piece of red-hot metal.
 - 2.** Pericles was called the “Olympian” for his serenity and reasoned approach to all matters.
 - 3.** In his most famous speech, the “Funeral Oration,” Pericles ignores the gods; he believed that man is the measure of all things. This was the influence of Anaxagoras.
- IV.** Phidias, another of Pericles’s friends, embodied the artistic and architectural revolution of the Athenian democracy.
- A.** The basic forms of Greek art and architecture can be traced back to ancient Egypt and were borrowed by the Greeks in the sixth century B.C.
 - B.** After the Persians Wars, the Greeks began to break away from Egyptian influences on their art and architecture to a much more vital and vigorous art.
 - C.** The Athenians wanted their city to be the enduring statement of these artistic ideas—one that rested on the principle that man is the measure of all things and that man is the embodiment of divine reason.
 - D.** After the Persian War, Athens needed to be rebuilt.

- E. This building program was the idea of Pericles and embodied his desire to make Athens the model of the Greek world.
 - F. It was financed by tribute from the cities of the Athenian Empire.
 - G. Through the influence of Pericles, the Athenian Assembly made Phidias director of the great building program undertaken by the Athenians.
 - H. Phidias was an Athenian citizen. The Greek and Romans regarded him as the greatest sculptor of classical antiquity.
 - I. The Parthenon (Temple of Athena) on the Acropolis was the centerpiece of this program.
 - 1. Phidias's statue of Athena in the Parthenon was his masterpiece.
 - 2. The architecture of the Parthenon and the statue of Athena were statements of the principle of divine reason.
 - 3. In an effort to achieve perfection, the Parthenon and the building program overall incurred enormous cost overruns. Pericles convinced the Athenian Assembly to pay for these.
- V. Born in the Greek city of Miletus in Asia Minor, Aspasia was a prostitute who rose to position and prominence as the mistress of Pericles.
- A. Although married and with two sons, Pericles lived openly with Aspasia, a prostitute.
 - B. Athenian wives were kept in subordinate positions and were poorly educated. Athenian men frequently preferred the company of courtesans, some of whom, like Aspasia, were highly cultivated.
 - C. Pericles lived openly with Aspasia and sired a son by her.
 - D. Aspasia was financially prosperous and became the owner of a number of brothels.
 - E. She was credited with having political influence with Pericles.
- VI. Pericles never lacked for critics. Around 433, his political opponents sought to undermine his influence by attacks on his friends.
- A. Constitutionally, Pericles had no more authority than the other nine generals who had been elected to office with him.
 - 1. He governed by moral authority alone, dependent on the willingness of the Athenians to trust him.

2. His opponents sought to undermine that moral authority by attacks on his friends.
- B. Anaxagoras was charged with impiety for asserting that the sun was not a god but a red-hot piece of metal. He was sent into exile.
- C. Phidias was brought to trial on a charge of embezzlement in connection with funds for the statue of Athena in the Parthenon.
 1. Pericles had made sure that Phidias kept careful accounts of the money spent on building the Parthenon, and this evidence cleared Phidias of the embezzlement charge.
 2. But Phidias was also charged with impiety for having portrayed himself and Pericles among the figures on the shield of Athena.
 3. Phidias was convicted and, according to Plutarch, died in prison.
- D. Aspasia was prosecuted for impiety.
 1. She was alleged to frequently quote the sophist belief that it was not possible to know with certainty that the gods existed.
 2. Greek women of Aspasia's time had no rights: They were not citizens, they could not vote, and their rights to own property were strictly limited.
 3. Aspasia was, therefore, a very bold woman.
 4. When the charge of impiety could not be sustained, Aspasia was accused of the crime of procuring free women for Pericles.
 5. She was saved only by the personal intervention and humiliation of Pericles.

VII. Pericles's life teaches us that not even the greatest of statesmen are inured to pain, loss, and public criticism.

Essential Reading:

Diodorus of Sicily, 12, pp. 38–40.

Plutarch, *Pericles*.

Supplementary Reading:

Castriota, *Official Art in Fifth Century Athens*.

Kirk and Raven, *Presocratic Philosophers*.

Thornton, *Greek Ways*, pp. 109–161.

Questions to Consider:

1. How does the Parthenon embody the concept of divine reason?
2. Compare the role of sophists in the Athenian democracy with the role of professors and other academic experts in our democracy.

Lecture Fourteen

Sophocles

Scope: Tragedy was the characteristic cultural statement of the Athenian democracy: that democracy required the total involvement of citizens in its political life. In such a democracy, tragedy must be preeminently political. In the view of Aristotle, Sophocles (495–406 B.C.) was the supreme tragedian. He was active in the political life of Athens and served as a general. He was also a critic of Pericles and his policies. This novel view is presented through the lens of three of his most enduring plays. In *Antigone*, Sophocles warned the Athenians about the potential for the abuse of power in the overweening personal authority of Pericles. *Oedipus the King* was an indictment of the failure of Pericles and “his war.” In his intense patriotism, Sophocles continued to use his plays as a forum for the discussion of the moral dimension of Athenian policies. *Oedipus at Colonus* proclaimed that the salvation of Athens lay in a return to traditional religious and moral values.

Outline

- I. The Athenian democracy was a radical idea.
 - A. It rested on the belief that every citizen should be as actively involved as possible in politics.
 - 1. Athenian democracy believed that every citizen was capable of exercising any government function.
 - 2. The democracy sought to involve as many citizens as possible in the workings of government.
 - 3. The Athenians were aware of the awesome responsibility of self-government and sought to educate themselves as a people for this task.
 - B. Dramatic performances, tragedies and comedies, were fundamental to this education for freedom.

- II.** Tragedy was the characteristic cultural statement of the Athenian democracy.
- A.** Tragedies were religious performances in honor of the god Dionysus, a savior god who promised eternal life. Through his association with wine, Dionysus embodied the concept of “nothing in excess.” (A little is good for you; too much will harm you.)
 - B.** Attendance at the performances was a civic duty for Athenian citizens.
 - C.** The performances were also forums for public consideration of fundamental issues of morality and politics.
 - D.** The tragedies’ underlying moral message dictated their use of noble themes and characters and exalted language.
 - E.** The immediate objective was to arouse fear and pity, effecting an emotional catharsis in the audience.
 - F.** The underlying message was that the audience would learn wisdom from the suffering of others.
 - G.** The creative age of the Athenian tragedy was exactly coterminous with the great age of the Athenian democracy, from the end of the Persian Wars to the end of the Peloponnesian War in 404 B.C.
 - H.** The writers of tragedy were all Athenian citizens.
 - I.** The three great tragedians were Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. Each presents us with profound insights into the ideas and ideals of the Athenian democracy.
 - J.** For Aristotle, Sophocles was the greatest of these, and his play *Oedipus the King* was the model tragedy.
- III.** Sophocles (496–406 B.C.) was the longest lived and most successful of the three great tragedians.
- A.** He first competed against Aeschylus in 468 B.C. and performed his last play in 406 B.C.
 - B.** He wrote more than 120 plays and won at least twenty victories.
 - C.** He had a public career.
 - 1.** He served as a treasurer of the Athenian Empire.
 - 2.** He served as a general along with Pericles during the war with Samos, but there is no indication that the two were friends.

3. Such was his reputation for political sagacity that he was chosen as one of ten advisers to deal with the extreme political situation arising from the defeat of the Athenian expedition to Sicily in 413 B.C.
- IV. Throughout his long life as a writer of tragedy, Sophocles grappled with the moral dimension of politics.
- A. Three of his greatest plays are *Antigone* (442 B.C.), *Oedipus the King* (429 B.C.), and *Oedipus at Colonus* (first performed posthumously in 401 B.C.).
 - B. Sophocles approached these dramas on three levels:
 1. The setting of the stories themselves is the mythological past.
 2. Their themes had immediate political meaning for Sophocles's day.
 3. These tragedies speak across the ages.
- V. *Oedipus the King* was produced in 429 B.C., during the Peloponnesian War and at a time when a plague was ravaging Athens.
- A. This play is far more critical of Pericles than was *Antigone*.
 - B. Pericles had led the Athenians into the war with Sparta in his moral certainty that war was inevitable and that the Athenians would win.
 - C. At the outbreak of the war, Pericles had brought all the Athenians together inside the walls of Athens.
 - D. In 430 B.C., the plague (almost certainly bubonic plague) broke out in Athens.
 - E. By 429 B.C., Pericles was deeply unpopular as the cause of the war and the plague.
 - F. Sophocles's *Oedipus* was a man of reason who scoffed at the gods and their oracles.
 - G. Sophocles gave his audience many unveiled clues that Pericles was his model for *Oedipus*.
 1. A plague ravages Thebes in the play, just as the plague struck Athens in 430–429 B.C.
 2. The Spartans had demanded that Pericles be exiled from Athens as the pollution that was causing the war. In the play, *Oedipus* is called the pollution that has brought such suffering on the Athenians.

H. *Oedipus* conveyed the message to the Athenians that a higher morality existed than the laws of men.

VI. Sophocles had conveyed the same message in his earlier play, *Antigone*.

- A. For the young Antigone, the laws of the gods—the highest moral values—were to be valued over abusive political power.
- B. Her higher moral standards forced her to disobey the abusive laws of the tyrant Creon, who believed his laws were superior to those of the gods and that a ruler must be intransigent.
- C. Her refusal to reject these values cost Antigone her life.
- D. But Creon's tyranny brought disaster to his house.

VII. The politics of Athens still concerned Sophocles when he wrote *Oedipus at Colonus* at the end of his life in 406 B.C.

- A. Oedipus is now an old man, a pariah, who has found sanctuary in Athens.
- B. As a reward to the Athenians for allowing Oedipus to find peace in their city, the gods willed that Athens would never know defeat.
- C. Thus, in his last play, written before the end of the Peloponnesian War when the hope of victory was still alive, Sophocles, the patriot, reminds the Athenians of their greatness—their generosity of mind.
- D. Pericles now represents the Athenian people.
- E. It is the hope of Sophocles that the Athenians have now learned through the sufferings of the war the lesson Oedipus had learned from his suffering: Fear of the gods is the beginning of wisdom and salvation.

Essential Reading:

Sophocles, *Antigone*, *Oedipus the King*, *Philoctetes*, and *Oedipus at Colonus*.

Supplementary Reading:

Meier, *Greek Tragedy*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do we have anything in our American democracy comparable to Athenian tragedy as a public forum for the consideration of moral and political issues?
2. Can you see Pericles in the character of Oedipus in *Oedipus the King*?

Lecture Fifteen

Thucydides

Scope: Historical research and writing began in the Athenian democracy of the fifth century B.C. It was born out of the conviction that the study of the past offered the best means of making decisions in the present and foreseeing the future. Herodotus was the “father of history,” but—in the view of antiquity and the modern age—Thucydides (471–400 B.C.) was the greater historian. He was the founder of scientific history, the attribution of history to human, not divine, motivation. He was deeply immersed in the intellectual currents of his day, and strong parallels have been noted between his approach to the body politic and the discoveries of scientific medicine attributed to his contemporary Hippocrates. Thucydides participated actively in the political life of Athens. He was an admirer of Pericles. He was also a failed general, who spent much of the war in exile. His *History of the Peloponnesian War* has been called “the eternal manual of statesmen.” This lecture focuses on specific passages in that history to explore what is most enduring in Thucydides’s view of politics and human nature.

Outline

- I. The Athenian democracy gave birth to the liberal arts as Aristotle defined them: the learning suited to a free individual.
 - A. The freedom of thought and speech that marked the Athenian democracy of the fifth century B.C. gave rise to several significant lines of thought:
 1. Scientific medicine: Thanks to Hippocrates, disease, for the first time in history, was attributed to natural causes.
 2. Philosophy: The search for truth was now seen as best guided by reason.
 3. Tragedy grew out of the need of the Athenian people to educate themselves for the awesome responsibilities of self-government.
 4. The art of rhetoric also evolved as a product of Athenian democracy.

- 5. History evolved as a means of educating the Athenian people through the lessons of the past.
 - B. Herodotus, “father of history” and a non-Athenian, wrote his history for an Athenian audience and narrated it to them.
 - C. Thucydides, the second great historian, was an Athenian citizen.
- II. Herodotus and Thucydides can be contrasted and compared.
- A. Herodotus is a storyteller; Thucydides is a scientific historian.
 - B. Herodotus sees the hand of god in all human events; Thucydides leaves the gods out of his history.
 - C. However, both historians are profoundly concerned with the moral dimension of history. Both historians write out of the conviction that not only do we learn from history but that actions have moral consequences that work through history.
- III. Thucydides, born c. 471 B.C., was an Athenian citizen from a wealthy and aristocratic family.
- A. Thucydides was an admirer of Pericles and agreed with Pericles’s war policy.
 - B. He believed that Athens was ultimately defeated because Pericles’s successors were weak and followed the will of the people.
 - C. He was descended from a local ruling family who owned gold mines in Thrace, a non-Greek area in the northwest corner of the Greek mainland.
 - D. As a youth, Thucydides reportedly heard Herodotus recite a portion of the *Histories* before an audience at the Olympic Games and was moved to tears.
 - E. He was elected one of ten generals for the year 429 B.C. and entrusted with an important command around the stronghold of Amphipolis.
 - F. He was too late to prevent the capture of Amphipolis by a Spartan force and was exiled for twenty years.
 - 1. The charge may have been treason.
 - 2. The popular politician Cleon may well have been the prime mover behind the exile. (Thucydides displays a profound hatred for Cleon in his *History*.)

- G. In exile, Thucydides traveled through the Greek world collecting material for his history.
- IV. Thucydides became regarded as the model for the writing of history.
- A. Tacitus modeled his history of Rome on the somber and objective truths of Thucydides.
 - B. Thucydides's influence has echoed down the centuries: For the Founders of the United States, his history was considered "the eternal manual of statesmen."
 - C. George Marshall and Henry Kissinger have been admirers of Thucydides.
 - D. Convinced that it would be the greatest war in history, Thucydides began to collect material for his history at the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War in 431 B.C.
 - E. He begins with a history of early Greece, which reveals that he understood the connection between economics and political power.
 - F. Thucydides took a scientific approach to his account of the war, interviewing as many eyewitnesses as he could and balancing one against another to come up with the truth.
 - G. He frequently commented on the inaccuracy of the traditional view of events.
 - H. He recognized the importance of rhetoric and included many speeches from both of the warring sides.
 - I. He was interested in differentiating between true and alleged causes of the war, claiming that the Spartans had begun the war out of fear of the expansion of Athenian power.
- V. Thucydides has been compared to Machiavelli.
- A. In political philosophy and in his life, Thucydides is most like Machiavelli.
 - B. These two greatest analysts of politics were both political failures who spent their creative lives in exile.
 - C. Both seem open advocates of the policy that "might makes right."
 - D. Both believed that morality plays no role in politics except as hypocrisy.

- VI.** Yet Thucydides seems to point at a deeper moral truth in his history.
- A.** Thucydides does not explicitly make moral judgments. However, at two critical points in his narrative, his juxtaposition of events invites the reader to reconsider the traditional moral view.
 - B.** The first of these is the funeral oration of Pericles given in 430 B.C.
 - 1.** Its pride in the values and accomplishments of the Athenians borders on *hybris* (outrageous arrogance).
 - 2.** It crosses that border by making no reference to the gods.
 - C.** Thucydides's account of the funeral oration is directly followed by his description of the outbreak of the plague.
 - D.** The deduction to be made is that Thucydides believed that even his hero Pericles could be guilty of outrageous arrogance.
 - E.** After Pericles succumbed to the plague, his successors ruled openly by the policy that "might makes right."
- VII.** Thucydides makes the theme of his dialogue between the Melians and the Athenians this same doctrine.
- A.** In 421 B.C., a peace treaty was signed between the Spartans and Athenians.
 - B.** Many Athenians disagreed with the peace treaty and no sooner was it signed than the Athenians moved to break it.
 - C.** In 416 B.C., an Athenian expedition sought to force the neutral island nation of Melos to join the Athenian League.
 - 1.** This was only one of numerous such incidents during the war.
 - 2.** However, Thucydides chose to highlight it by creating a dialogue—the hallmark of Greek tragedy—between the Athenian ambassadors and the Melians.
 - D.** The Melians represented the conventional moral view. There are absolute rights and wrongs, and the gods care about human events and morality.
 - E.** The Athenians presented unabashedly the doctrine that might makes right.
 - F.** Although their position seemed hopeless, the Melians decided that honor demanded that they resist and trust to the justice of their cause for victory.

- G. Thucydides relates how the Athenians captured the city, how all the male Melians were put to death and the women and children were sold into slavery.
- H. In the very next sentence, Thucydides begins his narrative of the tragic fall of Athens that was the expedition to Sicily.
- I. Thucydides does not use the word *hybris*, but by immediately juxtaposing the Melian tragedy with the fall of Athens, he implies that outrageous acts have disastrous consequences.

Essential Reading:

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*.

Supplementary Reading:

Luce, *Greek Historians*, pp. 60–98.

Questions to Consider:

1. How would you compare Herodotus and Thucydides as historians?
2. The argument has been made that the Melians were guilty of *hybris*. After all, is it not outrageous arrogance to think that you know what the gods approve? Do you agree?

Lecture Sixteen

Alcibiades

Scope: Alcibiades (450–404 B.C.), nephew of Pericles, was born to wealth and position. Handsome and brilliant, he received the finest education of his day, imbibing the intellectually radical ideas of the sophists and Socrates. Above all, he learned that might makes right and that success is the only criterion for right and wrong. Alcibiades was the antithesis of Pericles. Alcibiades had neither principles nor a moral compass. His vision was political power for himself, but his charisma and ability gave him a dangerous degree of influence over the Athenians. In pursuit of his goal of dictatorial power, he led the Athenians to continue the war with Sparta and to undertake the conquest of Sicily. Thwarted by his enemies, Alcibiades turned traitor and was a primary cause for the ultimate defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War. Alcibiades was the product of the Athenian democracy, and to his critics, he embodied the failing of that democracy.

Outline

- I. Alcibiades is the most fascinating single character in the history of fifth-century Greece. He was the culmination of the political life of the Athenian democracy as Socrates was the culmination of its intellectual life.
 - A. Alcibiades was born in 451/50 B.C., the son of Cleinias.
 1. His father, Cleinias, was active in Athenian politics and a member of the famous family of the Alcmaeonid.
 2. Wealthy and courageous, Cleinias equipped a trireme at his own expense, with which he gained distinction at the Battle of Artemisium in the Persian War.
 3. He was killed in action, fighting against the Thebans at the Battle of Coronea in 447 B.C.
 - B. Alcibiades was raised as the ward of Pericles, who was his uncle.
 - C. He received a superb education.
 1. He studied under the best sophists.
 2. Very intelligent, he was the favorite pupil of Socrates.

3. Living with Pericles was an education in itself.
 - D. He was handsome at all stages of his life, so much so that he was represented among the horsemen on the sculptures of the Parthenon carved by Phidias.
 - E. Alcibiades was willful, spoiled, and ambitious.
 - F. At the age of about eighteen, he became the friend of Socrates.
 - G. He was courted by both men and women.
 - H. He enjoyed outraging people.
- II.** Early in his career, Alcibiades revealed a disregard for moral scruples and an ambition for absolute rule.
- A. He advised his uncle, Pericles, to avoid being accountable to the Athenian people.
 - B. He was disappointed by the Peace of Nicias, a feeling he shared with many of the Athenians of his generation.
 - C. He saw in the renewal of the Peloponnesian War an opportunity to achieve his political goal: for Athens to be the number-one power in the Greek world and for Alcibiades to be dictator of Athens.
 - D. He used his wealth and family connections to undermine the Peace of Nicias—he paid bribes and bought himself an ambassadorship to Argos.
 - E. He drew Athens into a military alliance with Argos, the bitter enemy of Sparta.
 - F. This brought about the Battle of Mantinea in 418 B.C., which threatened to renew the Peloponnesian War.
- III.** Alcibiades was the prime mover of the Sicilian expedition. In this, however, he merely reflected the will of the majority of Athenians.
- A. In 415, Segesta, a non-Greek city in Sicily, asked for Athenian help against the aggression of its neighboring city of Selinus.
 1. The vaunted tradition of the Athenian democracy's foreign policy was to use its power in defense of the weak.
 2. In fact, Athens had long been interested in extending its power to Sicily.
 3. The intention of the Athenian expedition in 415 was the conquest of the entire island of Sicily.

- B. Alcibiades convinced the Athenians that Sparta was determined to renew the war; that Syracuse, the chief city of Sicily and a colony of Sparta's ally Corinth, was going to enter the war on the side of the Spartans.
- C. The conquest of Sicily would prepare the way for the Athenian conquest of Carthage and Italy, giving the Athenians the resources they needed for a final victory over Sparta.
- D. Nicias despised Alcibiades and believed that nothing but financial and political ruin would come from a renewal of the war.
- E. He tried to dissuade the Athenians from agreeing to Alcibiades's plan to invade Sicily.
- F. At the height of preparations for the Sicilian expedition, the statues of Hermes were mutilated.
- G. Alcibiades was accused of this crime of impiety. Alcibiades wanted a trial to vindicate himself, but a trial was prevented by his enemies.
- H. The mutilation of the Hermae was done at the instruction of Nicias and his party in an effort to discredit Alcibiades.
- I. When Athenian troops arrived in Sicily in the summer of 415 B.C., the neutral Greek cities refused to supply them.
 - 1. Nicias advised a return to Athens; Lamachus advised invading Syracuse.
 - 2. Alcibiades refused either advice, preferring to show off his diplomatic skills in a futile effort to gain allies.
- J. With most of Alcibiades's supporters participating in the expedition, it was easy for his enemies at home to prosecute the case of impiety against him.
- K. He was recalled in the fall of 415 B.C. to stand trial.
- L. Through bribery, he escaped to Italy and was sentenced to death in absentia.

Essential Reading:

Plutarch, *Alcibiades*.

Supplementary Reading:

Ellis, *Alcibiades*.

Forde, *Ambition to Rule*.

Questions to Consider:

1. What twentieth-century politician might you compare to Alcibiades?
2. Athenian foreign policy rested in part on the moral assumption that strong nations should use their powers to aid the weak. Is there anything comparable to this ideal in the history of American foreign policy?

Lecture Seventeen

Nicias

Scope: The personal and political enemy of Alcibiades, Nicias (465–414 B.C.) led the conservative party at Athens during a significant part of the Peloponnesian War. A wealthy man of great reputation for his piety and virtue, he negotiated a peace with Sparta in 421 B.C. Despite his opposition to the Sicilian expedition in 415 B.C., Nicias was named by the Athenian Assembly as one of its three commanders, along with Alcibiades. Ultimately, supreme command of the expedition devolved on him. He proved himself to be one of the worst generals in history. Lazy, inept, and cowardly, he brought disaster on the Athenian expeditionary force. In fact, like many men of reputed virtue, he was a fraud, deceptive and manipulative. We study Nicias because examples of bad leaders are frequently more instructive than those of good ones.

Outline

- I. Plutarch included among his biographies some individuals who are models of how not to succeed. Marc Antony is one of these. Nicias is another. The idea is that we can learn as much—perhaps more—from failure as from success.
- II. The Athenians sailed with sufficient forces to defeat Syracuse.
 - A. They had 134 triremes rowed by free Athenian citizens and 5,000 hoplites.
 - 1. They also had some 25,000 light armed troops—archers, slingers, and javelin-throwers.
 - 2. Their army's only real weakness lay in heavy cavalry.
 - B. The Athenians had spent the first year sailing around trying to get allies; they succeeded only in getting Maxos and Catania, Ionian cities, related by race to the Athenians.
 - C. At Sicily, Nicias and Lamachus were left in command when Alcibiades jumped ship and escaped those who had come to arrest him.

- D. Only in 414 B.C., after Alcibiades's recall, did Nicias agree to Lamarcus's demand that they besiege the fortress of Syracuse.
- E. The Athenians were able to obtain supplies from the native people of Sicily, the Sicels, who were enemies of the Syracusans.
- F. Nicias built a fort and began a wall to cut off supplies to Syracuse.
- G. The Athenian fleet cut off sea access to Syracuse.
- H. The Syracusans tried to cut off the Athenians and in the fighting, Lamachus was killed.

III. Nicias was now in command.

- A. Nicias was in advanced middle age and poor health and was opposed to the expedition.
- B. He wanted political office for the sake of having the office.
- C. He was wealthy. He possessed 1,000 slaves, who worked in his silver mines.
- D. He was a demagogue, courting popular favor, and very different from Pericles.
- E. By character, Nicias was cautious, even timid.
- F. He was fearful of the power of the people to punish political leaders. He lived in dread of the informants (whistle blowers) who were so prominent a feature of Athenian democratic life.
- G. He was especially concerned that he would be held to account for his deeds in Sicily. (Many soldiers serving under him were Athenian citizens with a right to vote.)

IV. Nicias's military ineptitude brought about the defeat of the Athenians.

- A. Nicias failed to complete the siege wall around Syracuse and believed the Syracusans were on the brink of surrender.
- B. The arrival of the Spartan officer Gylippus turned the situation around.
 - 1. He disciplined the Syracusan army.
 - 2. He built a fleet.
 - 3. He developed a strategy to defeat the Athenians.
- C. The Syracusans built a blockade of their own and cut off the Athenians on sea and land.

- D. While the Athenians were fighting the Syracusan fleet, their land troops came to watch the sea battle and left a series of forts unguarded.
 - 1. The Syracusans captured the forts and their contents—treasure, grain, and supplies.
 - 2. Nothing contributed more to the decay of the Athenian forces than this maneuver.
- E. The arrival of a second Athenian expedition, under the general Demosthenes, failed to relieve the situation.
 - 1. Nicias failed to warn Demosthenes of the situation.
 - 2. The Syracusans blockaded the second Athenian fleet once it had entered the harbor.
- F. Demosthenes failed to capture the high ground and the Athenians lost huge numbers of men in a night battle.
- G. When an eclipse of the moon halted the Athenian retreat, the Syracusans utterly demolished their fleet and their land troops.
- H. Nicias was tortured to death by the Syracusans.

Essential Reading:

Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Books VI–VII.

Supplementary Reading:

Kagan, *Peace of Nicias*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. Was the Sicilian expedition a reasonable strategic undertaking or was it folly from the beginning?
- 2. Can you find a parallel in American history to Nicias? What would you say about George McClellan in the Civil War?

Lecture Eighteen

Alcibiades and the Peloponnesian War

Scope: Like World Wars I and II, the Peloponnesian War was a total war that stretched both Athens and Sparta to their limits. Although the Spartans ultimately proved more adaptable to the demands of the conflict, the Athenians waged the war with extraordinary tenacity and courage. Even after the devastating defeat in Sicily, the Athenians refused to give up. Convinced that Sparta was determined to destroy them, the Athenians undertook a propaganda campaign to give themselves the moral courage to endure. They resorted to bold military and political strategies to give themselves the resources and leadership for the war. This included the recall of Alcibiades, whose military genius and political skill restored Athens to a commanding position. However, Sparta, too, produced a leader in Lysander, a man with far more integrity and greater ability than Alcibiades.

Outline

- I.** The Peloponnesian War challenged both Athens and Sparta to the limit.
 - A.** It was total war, engaging the full resources of both nations.
 - B.** It was also a test of two opposing systems of government: the balanced constitution of Sparta and the radical democracy of Athens.
 - C.** In his funeral oration, Pericles compared the two systems to the great advantage of Athens.
 - D.** In the test of war, the Spartan system proved superior.
 - 1.** The Spartans adapted their system to the demands of war.
 - 2.** The Spartans developed the naval power and financial resources to win total victory over the Athenians.
 - 3.** The Spartans also produced the leader to achieve this victory: Lysander.
- II.** The situation in Athens after the defeat of the Sicilian expedition was desperate.
 - A.** Athens had lost 200 triremes and some 60,000 men in Sicily.

- B. The cities of the empire were in revolt.
- C. The Spartan occupation of Decelea caused severe economic hardship.
 - 1. After he escaped from Sicily, Alcibiades had fled to Sparta, where he gave strategic military advice to the Spartans.
 - 2. Following this advice, the Spartans occupied Decelea, a politically and economically crucial position in Attica.
 - 3. Hundreds of Athenian slaves ran away to Decelea, where the Spartans freed them.
 - 4. The Athenians had no money to build new ships or to pay troops.

III. However, the Athenians did not surrender. Why?

- A. Two plays produced in this general time period give us an understanding of the mindset that determined the Athenians to continue the war no matter what the cost.
 - 1. *The Trojan Women* of Euripides was produced in 415 B.C.
 - 2. *Lysistrata* of Aristophanes was produced in 411.
- B. Scholars have long read these plays through the spectacles of twentieth-century values; so read, they have been taken as anti-war plays, the pleas of pacifists.
- C. Interpreted through the eyes of the male Athenians who composed the audience and made policy at Athens, however, a very different understanding emerges.
- D. *The Trojan Women* and *Lysistrata* are pro-war plays. They show the Athenians why the war must be continued until absolute victory is won.
 - 1. No negotiated peace with Sparta is possible. The Spartans are bent on the complete annihilation of the Athenians.
 - 2. Peace without victory will mean only defeat and a total reversal of all the values cherished by the Athenians.

IV. Under the leadership of Alcibiades, the armed forces of Athens began, in 411 B.C., a comeback that might have led to total victory. The strategic and tactical brilliance and political integrity of the Spartan Lysander forestalled that victory.

- A. After his interlude in Sparta, Alcibiades went to Persia.

1. He befriended the *satrap* of Asia Minor and persuaded him to supply both the Spartans and the Athenians with just enough money to continue their war.
 2. As an envoy from Persia, Alcibiades then persuaded the Athenians to overthrow their democratic government and establish an oligarchy in order to receive money from the Persians.
 3. He next appealed to the Athenian fleet—the most democratic element of Athenian society—and offered to help them restore the democracy.
 4. With the democracy restored, Alcibiades was made commander-in-chief of the Aegean forces.
 5. Thus, starting in 410 B.C., the Athenians began to win back their empire.
 6. By 407 B.C., the empire had been restored.
 7. Alcibiades returned to Athens a hero.
 8. But in 406 B.C., the Athenians were defeated by the Spartans under Lysander at the Battle of Notion. Alcibiades was charged with criminal negligence and exiled again.
- B.** Lysander was a man of integrity.
1. He was not a member of the royal family and never king.
 2. His honesty won for him the support of Cyrus, the son of the Persian king.
 3. With the financial support of Cyrus, Lysander constructed a fleet to challenge the Athenians.
 4. In his hands, the Spartan fleet of 160 ships became a formidable weapon.

Essential Reading:

Euripides, *Trojan Women*.

Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*.

Supplementary Reading:

Pomeroy, *Greece*, pp. 287–343.

Questions to Consider:

1. Taking Pericles's funeral oration and Plutarch's *Lycurgus* as our sources, which nation, Athens or Sparta, most proved true to its values during the Peloponnesian War?
2. Do you think that the character and career of Alcibiades justifies a general condemnation of the Athenian democracy?

Lecture Nineteen

Lysander and Socrates

Scope: The figure of Alcibiades continued to dominate the political scene of Greece in the last days of the Peloponnesian War and even after his death in 403 B.C. Athenian attitudes toward Alcibiades were responsible for the success of Lysander and the trial of Socrates. The exile of Alcibiades by the Athenians gave Lysander his chance to prove himself the most successful general and statesman of the war. His character, patriotism, diplomatic skills, and strategic genius brought victory to Sparta and made him the most famous man in Greece. His subsequent career is a cautionary tale about the blindness of arrogance, the power of envy, and the ability of mediocre men to thwart and ultimately destroy a great leader. The determination of mediocrity to destroy greatness is also the story of the trial of Socrates. His close relationship with Alcibiades was the real reason that his fellow Athenians hated him. The Athenians saw his life and teachings as subversive of their democracy. When some of the favorite pupils of Socrates overthrew the democracy, the lesson seemed clear: The corrupting influence of Socrates must be removed from the Athenian body politic.

Outline

- I.** Lysander's naval victory at Aegospotami in 405 B.C. was one of the most decisive battles in history.
 - A.** Lysander gained a total defeat of the Athenian fleet.
 - B.** The Athenians surrendered unconditionally.
 - C.** The allies of Sparta demanded that Athens be annihilated, just as the Athenians had annihilated Melos.
 - D.** Lysander, however, gave moderate terms.
 - 1.** He told the Athenian people that they were saved because of their past courage against the Persians.
 - 2.** The cities of the Athenian Empire were liberated and Athens was stripped of her imperial power, but the Athenian people kept their freedom and their laws.

- E. Lysander was celebrated as no Greek had ever been celebrated before; he was the first living Greek to be worshipped as a god.
 - F. His success aroused the envy of his fellow Spartans.
 - 1. He was given lesser commands.
 - 2. His prestige was undermined.
 - G. He was killed in action in 395 while leading an expedition against Sparta's erstwhile ally, Thebes.
 - H. Lysander was the greatest Spartan commander of all time. He had brought freedom to Greece.
 - I. Lysander may be compared with General George S. Patton. He was the perfect man for a single moment in history and is a testimony to the damage that great men can suffer at the hands of mediocrity.
- II.** With the encouragement of the Spartans, the Athenians established an oligarchy (government by the few) in September 404 B.C.
- A. The oligarchy was led by Critias and Charmides.
 - B. Athenian citizenship was reduced to a group of 3,000 men.
 - C. The oligarchy instituted a reign of terror; many people were murdered for their wealth.
 - D. Eventually, the revolution began to devour its own children.
 - E. The tyranny was overthrown with Spartan support, and democracy was reestablished in 403 B.C.
- III.** Also in 403 B.C., Alcibiades came to his end.
- A. After the defeat of the Athenians by Lysander and the Spartans at Aegospotami in 405 B.C., Alcibiades went back to Persia.
 - B. He became an adviser to the Persian king.
 - C. He was murdered in revenge by the brothers of a woman he had seduced.
- IV.** The teacher of Alcibiades was Socrates. He was also the teacher of Critias. The Athenians' profound hatred for both these men led them to become suspicious of Socrates.
- A. Alcibiades and Socrates were both products of the radical democracy of Athens.

1. Although separated by a generation, both grew to maturity amidst the intellectual ferment created by democratic freedom.
 2. Alcibiades and Socrates represented, respectively, the most advanced aspects of the political and intellectual currents of the day.
 3. They were close friends, and Socrates exerted considerable influence on Alcibiades.
 4. Both would ultimately be viewed by their fellow Athenians as traitors to the democracy, and both were condemned to death by the Athenians.
- B.** Socrates considered himself the most Athenian of Athenians. He never left Athens to travel in search of wisdom, as Solon, for example, did.
- C.** Like all other Athenians citizens, Socrates served in the military. Although already in his forties, he fought with bravery in major battles of the first part of the Peloponnesian War: Potidaea (431), Delium (424), and Amphipolis (424).
- D.** He was born an Athenian citizen in 469 B.C.; his father, Sophroniscus, was probably a stone worker or, perhaps, a sculptor.
- E.** He followed no trade and made no effort to earn money.
- F.** He was married and had two sons. His wife, Xanthippe, had a reputation as a shrew.
- G.** Socrates followed his conscience, which made him at first suspect, then hated by his fellow citizens.
1. He went about Athens questioning everybody, especially those reputed to be wise.
 2. He took unpopular stands on the basis of principle.
 3. He alone voted against the motion to try, as a group, generals charged with dereliction of duty after the Battle of Arginusae in 406 B.C.
- H.** The intensity of hatred against Socrates was already clear in 427 B.C. in the caricature of Socrates as a sophist in Aristophanes's comedy *The Clouds*.
1. The elements of the legal charges made against Socrates in 399 B.C. were already present in this satire, directed both at Socrates and his favorite pupil, Alcibiades.

2. Socrates was seen to corrupt the young and not believe in the god of Athens but in new and different divinities.
- I. For the Athenians, who believed their democracy was superior to the government of the Spartans, their defeat by the Spartans was incomprehensible; they were ready to find a scapegoat.
 1. Alcibiades and Critias were out of reach.
 2. Socrates was available.
- J. In 399 B.C., four years after the restoration of the democracy, Socrates was called to account by his fellow citizens.

Essential Reading:

Aristophanes, *The Clouds*.

Aristotle, *The Athenian Constitution*, chapters 34–40.

Plutarch, *Lysander*.

Supplementary Reading:

Vlastos, *Socrates*.

Questions to Consider:

1. How could Socrates be regarded as a threat to the Athenian democracy?
2. What aspects of Socrates's teaching do you see reflected in Alcibiades?

Lecture Twenty

The Trial of Socrates

Scope: In his funeral oration, Pericles celebrated the Athenian democracy for its tolerance. The Athenians treasured freedom of speech as essential to true democracy. Yet this same Athenian democracy put to death its greatest thinker and teacher, Socrates. The previous lecture placed the trial of Socrates in the political climate of Athens at the end of the Peloponnesian War and Socrates's close relationship with avowed enemies of democracy. This lecture examines the trial and last days of Socrates. Four dialogues of Plato provide our basic sources: *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*. These are less a history and more a gospel, written to convince posterity that the Athenians had wrongly put to death "the best, the wisest, and the most just man" of his day. Through Plato, Socrates would prevail over his enemies and prove that evil men may kill a good man but can never harm him.

Outline

- I. Socrates was charged with corrupting the young and with impiety. These were both capital charges.
 - A. In their view, the Athenians were justified in condemning and executing Socrates. His life and message were threats to their form of democracy.
 - B. His students, Alcibiades and Critias, had done the most damage to the Athenian democracy.
 1. Both men were openly hostile to the Athenian democracy.
 2. Alcibiades had been quoted as saying, "democracy is acknowledged folly."
 3. Athenian logic concluded that such attitudes must represent the teaching of Socrates.
 - C. But Socrates never wrote a book, so we cannot be sure.
 - D. What we do have are two divergent portraits of Socrates.
 1. One comes from Aristophanes's satire *The Clouds* and from the fact of Socrates's trial.

2. The other comes from two of Socrates's students, Xenophon and Plato, whose lives were shaped by their teacher, and from Aristotle, father of the university, who was also influenced by the ideas of Socrates through his teacher, Plato.
- II.** It has been said of Plato that all of history is but "a series of footnotes to Plato."
- A.** For Plato, Socrates's trial and execution were the beginning of his whole intellectual pursuit of truth.
 - B.** Plato devoted four dialogues to the trial and execution of Socrates: the *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*.
 1. In these dialogues, Socrates is shown to prefer the path of truth to that of acquittal.
 2. Socrates even seems to go out of his way to exacerbate his jury.
 3. Through the dialogues, Plato argues that Socrates's life had been devoted to his belief in the justice of the gods and the immortality of the soul.
 - C.** In *Euthyphro*, Socrates, minutes before his trial, is shown to be unconcerned with his own fate but anxious to help another find wisdom.
 1. Plato reveals Socrates's typical method of posing one analytical question after another to prove that meaning and truth should not be taken for granted.
 2. Plato also reveals that by following an intense and unrelenting line of questioning, Socrates could frustrate and irritate his audience, by tearing down a personal value or belief without providing a compensatory value.
 - D.** In his *Apology*, Plato gives us Socrates's account of himself to his accusers and his jury, showing that Socrates preferred the path of truth to that of acquittal.
 1. Socrates realized that numerous stories had been circulated about him.
 2. He considered these stories to be slanders.
 3. He explained that his life of questioning in search of the truth had shown him that a wise man knows "that he does not know."

4. He admitted that he exacerbated the people he questioned and that he built up a great deal of enmity against himself, culminating in the criminal charges he now faced.
 5. He denied the charges that he was a sophist and an atheist and that he corrupted the young.
 6. He claimed that his example taught obedience to the law.
 7. His accusers offered to drop the charges on condition that he cease questioning values; Socrates refused to change his ways.
 8. Socrates was convicted and condemned to death.
- E. In his *Crito*, Plato gives an account of Socrates's last hours.
1. Socrates rejected his friends' offer to help him escape.
 2. He gave the reason that escape would violate Athenian law, which would set a bad example for Athenian youth.
 3. Claiming that his whole life—a search for absolute truths—had been a preparation for death, Socrates took hemlock and died.
- F. By the words of his *Apology*, Plato would hand down to posterity this condemnation of the Athenian democracy that had put to death the best man of that age, whose whole life had been a search for wisdom.

Essential Reading:

Plato, *The Last Days of Socrates*.

Supplementary Reading:

Stone, *The Trial of Socrates*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think that the dynamic teaching of Socrates had to be institutionalized, so to speak, by Plato in order to make it effective over the long term?
2. By institutionalization, do we mean writing it down and giving a formal structure to the teaching?

Lecture Twenty-One

Xenophon, Plato and Philip

Scope: After Socrates's death, his pupils Xenophon and Plato came to believe that Athens had a perverted form of government. Xenophon espoused the idea that monarchy was the best form of government, while Plato developed the ideal of a monarchical government ruled by a philosopher-king. With Philip of Macedonia (382–336 B.C.), monarchy emerged as the dominant political form in the Greek world. As his contemporaries understood, Philip was one of the greatest statesmen in history. He was a master of diplomacy and warfare, cunning, and courageous. He transformed Macedonia from a weak, half-civilized land on the frontiers of Greece into the supreme power in the Greek world. His victory at the Battle of Chaeronea in 338 B.C. marked the end of the era of the city-state. Of modern political leaders, Philip most calls to mind the German Chancellor Bismarck. Through “blood and iron,” he unified his country. The supreme opportunist, he was nonetheless guided throughout his career by a vision of personal and national power. To the student of leadership, Philip offers one of the most instructive examples in all antiquity.

Outline

- I.** For Socrates's pupils Xenophon and Plato, Socrates, far from corrupting the young, was the best, wisest, and most just man of his day.
 - A.** Socrates's legacy was one of example and ideas: the example of his life—the philosopher, the searcher after wisdom, whose very death was a testimony to the search for the truth.
 - B.** Socrates's ideas lived on in his pupils.
 - C.** The fact that Athens had put Socrates to death discredited that city in the eyes of his pupils and in the legacy of their philosophical tradition.
 - D.** Xenophon was so traumatized by the death of his teacher that he left Athens.

- E. He took service as a soldier in the army of the Persian King Cyrus and left a memorable account of Cyrus's attempt to overthrow his brother.
 - F. Xenophon also served the king of Sparta and wrote a book on the constitution of the Spartans.
 - G. Disassociating himself from Athens and its democracy, he came to believe that the best form of government was monarchy, and he wrote a panegyric on the life of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire, the *Cyropaedic*.
- II. Plato also rejected Athenian democracy as a perverted form of government.
- A. Plato's entire life reflected the influence of his teacher, Socrates, and the idea that the best form of government, ultimately, is one ruled by a philosopher-king.
 - B. He passed this legacy on to Aristotle, who put it into effect by becoming the tutor of Alexander, the son of Philip, King of Macedonia.
 - C. The rise of monarchy in the fourth century B.C., both as an idea and as a reality, was the most important single fact of that era.
 - 1. The city-state ceased to be the dominant political unit.
 - 2. For the next 1,600 years, monarchy dominated the world.
- III. Like World War I in our own century, the Peloponnesian War of the fifth century B.C. exacted a terrible toll.
- A. In terms of manpower losses, one in four Athenians of military age and one in two Spartans were killed.
 - B. The psychological damage was even greater: There was a general feeling that nothing was worth so high a cost.
 - C. Yet Athens, Thebes, Corinth, and other Greek cities continued to play the old game of power politics and failed to respond to the new conditions.
- IV. Above all, the Greek powers failed to foresee the rise of a new power, Macedonia.
- A. In comparison with Greece, Macedonia was large in geographical extent, with arable land, natural resources, and a sturdy peasant population.

- B. Political instability and disunity prevented the Macedonians from playing a major role.
 - C. Macedonia was a hereditary monarchy.
 - D. It was prey to its aggressive and barbaric neighbors: Illyrians, Paeonians, and Thracians.
 - E. It was a pawn in the power politics of the leading Greek states.
- V. All this changed with Philip.
- A. He assumed the royal power after the death of King Perdiccas, his brother, in a devastating defeat by the Illyrians in 359 B.C.
 - B. Philip quickly began to transform the Macedonian army; he had studied military science under some of the leading Greek generals of his day.
 - C. He had the vision of making Macedonia the greatest nation in the Greek world and himself, the master of the Greek world.
 - D. This vision motivated every move he would make for the rest of his life.
- VI. Philip created a national, professional army.
- A. He reorganized the infantry phalanx.
 - B. He developed heavy cavalry as a major striking unit.
 - C. He achieved close coordination of cavalry and infantry.
 - D. With his reorganized army, Philip won impressive victories over Illyrians, Paeonians, and Thracians, securing and expanding his borders.
 - E. By diplomatic and military means, he gained important cities, such as Amphipolis, and secured a major source of revenues in the gold mines of Mount Pangaeus.
- VII. From 356–346 B.C., Macedonia became a leading power in the Greek world.
- A. In 356 B.C., Philip's chariots won in the Olympic Games—recognition that he was a Greek.
 - B. That same year, he had a son, Alexander, by his wife, Olympia, sister of the king of Epirus.

- C. By diplomatic and military means, Philip expanded the borders of Macedonia and its place in the politics of Greece:
 - 1. Thessaly was joined into a personal union with Philip.
 - 2. Philip gained from Thessaly's cavalry, the best in the Greek world.
- D. The Athenians, however, remained complacent about Philip, considering him still to be a barbarian and subject to assassination, the fate of many Macedonian leaders.
- E. Only Demosthenes, among Athenian politicians, recognized the threat posed by Philip. But he could not persuade the Athenians.
- F. In a peace treaty with Athens in 346 B.C., Philip guaranteed the Athenians their power and position in the Black Sea area, which was critical to their grain supply.
- G. This was merely a stage in Philip's plan to conquer the Athenians.

VIII. By 341 B.C., Philip was finding occasions to break the treaty with Athens with attacks on such cities as Perinthus and Byzantium.

- A. By 338 B.C., Athens was forced to declare war.
- B. At Chaeronea in August 338, Philip's army defeated an allied force led by Athens and Thebes.
 - 1. Demosthenes served as a hoplite.
 - 2. Philip's son, Alexander, led Philip's cavalry in the battle.
- C. Chaeronea marked the end of the city-state as the dominant political unit in the Greek world.
- D. Philip never wanted the destruction of Athens, only the recognition of his position as leader of the Greek world.

IX. He formed an alliance with Athens and other Greek cities.

- A. The Athenians accepted Philip's peace terms.
- B. Contrast this with the resolute Athenian rejection of Xerxes's peace terms at the time of the Persian War.
- C. To solidify this unity, Philip intended to lead an allied Greek expeditionary force to liberate the Greek cities of Asia Minor from Persian rule.
- D. In June, 336 B.C., however, Philip was assassinated at the wedding of his daughter.
 - 1. His assassin, Pausanias, acted out of personal motives.

2. The Macedonians immediately made Philip's son, Alexander, king.
- X. The Greeks assumed that Macedonia and the empire would now fall apart. Alexander proved them wrong.

Essential Reading:

Barker, *Greek Political Theory*.

Hammond, *Macedonian State*.

Supplementary Reading:

Pomeroy, *Ancient Greece*, pp. 330–394.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you believe that great statesmen follow a consistent vision or are they mere opportunists?
2. Why do you think the response of the Athenians after Chaeronea was so different from their response to Xerxes's offer of peace?

Lecture Twenty-Two

Alexander the Great

Scope: Plutarch made Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.) and Julius Caesar the centerpieces of his *Lives of the Famous Greeks and Romans*. The most brilliant general in history and the most far-sighted statesman, Alexander transformed the history of the world. His own contemporaries sought to express his unsurpassed accomplishments by recognizing him as a god. Our lecture focuses on Alexander's qualities of leadership and the legacy he left to history. That legacy included the expansion of Greek civilization from Spain to India, the political and cultural achievements of the Roman Empire, and the spread of Christianity and Buddhism as world religions. Alexander's vision of the unity of mankind under the fatherhood of God is an ideal that we still strive for in vain.

Outline

- I. Alexander was twenty years old when he assumed the kingship after his father's assassination.
 - A. However, his background and experience was different from that of other twenty-year-olds, in his own day or ours.
 1. The influence of his mother, Olympias, was minimal.
 2. The influence of his father was very strong; Alexander received his military and political training from his father.
 - B. By age sixteen, Alexander had acquired extraordinary training in statesmanship and military affairs.
 1. Alexander had the remarkable opportunity to study with the most profound mind of his age, Aristotle, by whom he was significantly influenced.
 2. He had even led an army on his own.
 3. Plutarch, in his *Lives*, implies that Alexander's qualities were more than mortal.
 - C. He played a key role at the age of eighteen at the Battle of Chaeronea.

- II.** Alexander's actions in the first two years of his reign demonstrated qualities essential to his success.
- A.** He moved very rapidly to consolidate his power in Macedonia and in the Greek league that his father had formed.
 - B.** In 335 B.C., he successfully campaigned against the Illyrians and Thracians, who became devoted to him.
 - C.** He was ruthless in his use of power in the destruction of Thebes.
 - D.** He knew how to use power: Given the previous history of the Greek city-states, one of the most significant tributes to Alexander's skill as a statesman is the fact that he could be gone from Greece for eleven years, travel to the far corners of the world, and not be forced to return to Greece by a revolt of the cities.
 - E.** He was a genius in warfare, even as Einstein was a genius in physics or Michelangelo, in art.
- III.** Alexander conquered the Persian Empire between 334 and 323 B.C.
- A.** From the outset, Alexander's goal was to conquer the entire Persian Empire. In this way, he differed fundamentally from the limited intentions of his father.
 - B.** Within four months of landing in Asia, one of the ostensible aims of the expedition had been achieved: the liberation of the Greek cities.
 - C.** Alexander's great battles and campaigns included:
 - 1.** Granicus (334 B.C.);
 - 2.** Issus (333 B.C.);
 - 3.** Tyre (332 B.C.);
 - 4.** Gaugamela (331 B.C.);
 - 5.** Bactria (Afghanistan) and Sogdiana (329–328 B.C.);
 - 6.** Battle with Scythians (329 B.C.);
 - 7.** India and the Battle with Porus on the Hydaspes (327–326 B.C.).
 - D.** His campaigns reveal Alexander to be the supreme master of all four qualities of generalship:
 - 1.** Tactics: winning the battle;
 - 2.** Strategy: winning the war;
 - 3.** Logistics: supplying the army;

- 4. Battlefield command: leading the troops to victory in the heat of battle.
 - E. Alexander died of a fever in 323 B.C. while planning a further conquest.
- IV. Alexander did more than conquer the Persian Empire. He developed a vision of how to govern it by winning the hearts of the people.
- A. He assumed the role of Persian king.
 - B. He married Roxanne, daughter of the Persian king.
 - C. He integrated Persians and others into his army.
 - D. He appointed Persians as governors.
 - E. He made Persians and Macedonians ruling partners in the empire.
 - F. He had respect for the customs and cultures of his diverse empire.
- V. His vision of the brotherhood of mankind under the fatherhood of god sparked one of the most influential ideas in history, one that still reverberates today.

Essential Reading:

Plutarch, *Alexander*.

Supplementary Reading:

Arrian, *Alexander*.

Fox, *Alexander*.

Tarn, *Alexander*.

Questions to Consider:

- 1. Do you believe that history is made by great individuals like Alexander or by anonymous social and economic forces? Why was the Greek world ripe for Alexander?
- 2. How do you define the term “genius”? Apply this to one of Alexander’s battles or campaigns.

Lecture Twenty-Three

Pyrrhus

Scope: The Romans were the true heirs of Alexander's world empire. Had Alexander lived, he certainly would have invaded Italy and matched his forces against the armies of the Roman republic. Failing Alexander, Pyrrhus (318–272 B.C.), the King of Epirus in Greece, was the next best hope of the Greek cities in Italy and Sicily. Hannibal, no mean authority, considered Pyrrhus as second only to Alexander as a general. The life of Pyrrhus introduces us to the world of Alexander's successors and to the reasons that Rome rather than Greece would become master of the Mediterranean world. So costly were his three "victories" over the Romans that a "Pyrrhic victory" became proverbial for a success that in fact brings defeat. Pyrrhus is an object lesson in leadership, the talented individual who fails because of his inability to focus and "to pick his battles."

Outline

- I. Plutarch's *Life of Pyrrhus* is one of the best and most characteristic examples of this author's concept of the nature and purpose of biography. He stated that concept most clearly at the outset of his *Life of Alexander the Great*.
 - A. Alexander the Great died without a viable heir.
 - B. His generals, men like Seleucus, Antigonus, and Ptolemy, were men of vast ability and ambition.
 - C. They set about carving out kingdoms for themselves, using the most Machiavellian of tactics.
 - D. The onset of the Hellenistic age, from 323–281 B.C., was a period of constantly shifting alliances among these successors and of frequently inconclusive warfare.
 - E. In this school of treachery and military innovations, Pyrrhus learned the skills of warfare and statecraft.

II. Pyrrhus was born in 318 B.C. in Epirus.

- A.** Epirus was an ancient kingdom in northern Greece, roughly equivalent to the southern half of modern Albania.
 - 1.** Epirus was inhabited by fourteen tribes, of which the most significant was the Molossians.
 - 2.** These tribes spoke Greek.
 - 3.** The kings of the Molossians claimed descent from Pyrrhus, the son of Achilles, and our Pyrrhus was proudly conscious of this heritage.
- B.** From the very outset, the life of Pyrrhus was dangerous.
 - 1.** When Pyrrhus was born, his father had just been driven out of his kingdom by a rival.
 - 2.** Pyrrhus was rushed to safety in Illyria.
 - 3.** The Illyrian king raised Pyrrhus and eventually put him back on the throne in Epirus when Pyrrhus was twelve years old.
- C.** Driven from his kingdom at the age of seventeen, Pyrrhus took service as a soldier with Demetrius Poliorcetes (“the Besieger of Cities”), perhaps the most audacious of Alexander’s successors.
- D.** Pyrrhus spent time at the court of Ptolemy I in Egypt, married his daughter, and with Ptolemy’s support, became King of Epirus (c. 300 B.C.).
- E.** Treachery and murder were second nature to Pyrrhus and the only means to survive in his political world.
 - 1.** He murdered a rival to the throne of Epirus.
 - 2.** He fought his old friend Demetrius for control of Macedonia.
- F.** But Pyrrhus was also a brave and capable soldier, as good with the sword and spear as any man in his army.
- G.** He was charismatic, to the degree that he was thought to have miraculous curing powers.
- H.** He was filled with great plans, including conquest of Macedonia, Italy, Sicily, and Carthage, but was unable to focus his attention sufficiently to bring any of these to a conclusion. He was said to be like a man who got good throws with the dice but did not know how to use them.

III. In 281 B.C., not wishing to fight to retain the Macedonian throne, Pyrrhus accepted an invitation from the Greek cities of south Italy to

come with an armed force and liberate them from the rising power of Rome.

- A. With a force of 3,000 cavalry, 25,000 infantry, and 20 elephants, Pyrrhus won a victory over the Romans at the Battle of Heraclea in 280 B.C.
- B. Pyrrhus marched to within thirty-seven miles of Rome and tried unsuccessfully to negotiate with the Roman Senate.
- C. He defeated the Romans again at Ausculum in 279 B.C. However, he lost so many men that the term “Pyrrhic victory” became proverbial.
- D. Unable to focus, Pyrrhus spent 278–276 B.C. in a fruitless effort to conquer Sicily.
- E. He returned to Italy in 275 B.C., only to be defeated by the Romans at the Battle of Beneventum.

IV. In 275 B.C., Pyrrhus returned to Greece for more fruitless campaigns and a brief period as King of Macedonia. In 272 B.C., he was killed in street fighting in the city of Argos, when an old woman threw a roof tile on his head; he fell and was decapitated by an Argive soldier.

Essential Reading:

Plutarch, *Pyrrhus*.

Supplementary Reading:

Grant, *Rome*, pp. 87–90.

Pomeroy, *Greece*, pp. 427–443.

Shipley, *Greek World after Alexander*.

Questions to Consider:

1. Do you think that Pyrrhus really deserved such high praise as a general?
2. If you were Pyrrhus, which of your enterprises would you have chosen to focus on? Could the Romans have been conquered?

Lecture Twenty-Four

Cleopatra

Scope: The last and most serious challenge of Greece to Roman domination was offered by Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt (69–30 B.C.). The blood of Philip flowed in her veins, for she was descended from Ptolemy, Alexander's general and unacknowledged half-brother. She succeeded a long line of weak kings who had reduced Egypt to a Roman client state. Captivating in turn Julius Caesar and Marc Antony, she came close to defeating Octavian and becoming ruler of an imperial domain. This lecture goes behind the misinformation of Roman propaganda to reveal Cleopatra as one of the supreme figures of ancient history, a stateswoman whose vision of an eastern Mediterranean empire based on Greek culture foreshadowed the world of Byzantium.

Outline

- I.** The defeat of Pyrrhus by the Romans in 275 B.C. opened the way for the Roman conquest of Italy and the beginning of the great war with Carthage.
 - A.** By 201 B.C., the Romans had vanquished Carthage in two wars.
 - B.** By 146 B.C., the Romans were masters of the entire Mediterranean world; in that year, they burned to the ground the cities of Carthage and Corinth as symbols of their unshakable power.
- II.** The Ptolemys governed a well-administered and prosperous empire.
 - A.** From very early on, the kings of Egypt—Ptolemy and his descendents—recognized the power of Rome and sought to accommodate it.
 - B.** For their part, the Romans ensured Egypt's nominal independence.
 - C.** Egypt had been a single country since 3000 B.C.
 - D.** The Ptolemys established their own Greco-Macedonian bureaucracy.

- E. They made the decision not to engage in fruitless wars and frequently negotiated with ambitious Romans who sought to dominate Egypt.
- III.** Born in 69 B.C., Cleopatra was the daughter of King Ptolemy XII, the Flute Player. (The nickname is symptomatic of the royal incapacity of so many of the Ptolemaic males.)
- A. On the death of her father in 51 B.C., Cleopatra became queen at the age of eighteen.
 - B. According to Ptolemaic custom, she married her brother and ruled jointly with him.
 - C. Conflicts between them brought her to the attention of Julius Caesar.
 - D. She supported Caesar, while her brother opposed him in his campaigns in Egypt.
 - E. Her brother was killed in 47 B.C.
 - F. During Caesar's stay in Egypt, Cleopatra became his mistress.
 - G. Late in 47 B.C., she bore him a son, whom she named Caesarion (Little Caesar).
 - H. Caesar installed her on the throne of Egypt and had her marry a second of her brothers. Cleopatra subsequently murdered that brother.
 - I. From 46–44 B.C., she lived in Rome as Caesar's mistress.
 - J. After Caesar's assassination in 44 B.C., she returned to Egypt.
- IV.** In the aftermath of Caesar's assassination, two figures came to dominate political life in the Roman Empire.
- A. Julius Caesar Octavianus (Octavian) was the great nephew and adopted son of Caesar.
 - B. Marcus Antonius (Marc Antony) was Caesar's general, close friend and supporter, and consul in the year 44 B.C.
 - C. Together with the insignificant figure of Lepidus, Octavian and Antony formed a triumvirate, a body of three men authorized to restore stable government to Rome.

- D. At the Battle of Philippi in Greece in 42 B.C., Antony and Octavian conquered the armies of Brutus and Cassius, the assassins of Caesar.
 - E. Antony now assumed control of the eastern portion of the Roman Empire.
 - F. In pursuing his duties, he met Cleopatra in the city of Tarsus in Syria in 41 B.C. The two became intimate, and in 40 B.C., she bore him twins.
- V. Cleopatra was not only physically beautiful but also highly intelligent and gifted.
- A. Cleopatra was physically beautiful.
 - B. She was a master of many languages.
 - C. She could converse on many different subjects, including philosophy.
 - D. Her personality was a good match for that of Antony.
 - E. She was also shrewd and ruthless.
- VI. In the period from 41–31 B.C., Antony increasingly came under the personal control of Cleopatra. He was clearly deeply in love with her.
- A. Cleopatra's goal was to use Antony to overthrow the power of Rome, especially in the eastern Mediterranean.
 - B. Cleopatra believed she could establish an empire—and there were precedents for it—based on Greek culture, dominating Egypt and Syria.
 - C. Cleopatra was a public insult to Octavian's sister, Octavia, the wife of Antony.
 - D. Octavian portrayed Antony as driven mad by the Egyptian witch Cleopatra.
 - 1. Antony's expedition against the Parthians was a disaster.
 - 2. Antony refused to accept the reinforcements and supplies brought to him by his wife, Octavia. Yet he took them from Cleopatra.
 - 3. In 34 B.C., Antony bestowed considerable portions of the Roman Empire on his three children by Cleopatra: Alexander Helios (the sun), Cleopatra Selene (the moon), and Ptolemy, as well as on her son by Caesar, Caesarion.

VII. Octavian moved rapidly to gain support for a war against Egypt.

- A.** In 31 B.C., Rome under Octavian declared war on Cleopatra and Egypt.
- B.** Following Cleopatra's advice, and to the dismay of his troops, Antony decided to engage the Romans in a sea battle at Actium on September 2, 31 B.C.
- C.** At first, Antony's fleet was winning the battle, but the situation changed when Antony saw Cleopatra's ship sailing away in the middle of the battle.
- D.** He turned from the line of battle and deserted his men.
- E.** Antony and Cleopatra returned to Egypt.
- F.** Antony's fleet went over to the Roman side.
- G.** When Octavian's fleet arrived in Egypt, Antony's forces surrendered to the Romans.
- H.** In the face of the victorious advance of Octavian, Antony committed suicide, dying in the arms of Cleopatra.
- I.** Unable to seduce Octavian and unwilling to be led in triumph through Rome, Cleopatra committed suicide.
- J.** Octavia raised the children of Antony and Cleopatra. Caesarion was murdered.
- K.** So skillful was the political propaganda of Octavian that historians have still not fully appreciated the vision and capacity of Cleopatra.

VIII. Do we learn from biographies?

- A.** It has been argued that a set of Plutarch's *Lives* ought to be placed on every library shelf in the country.
- B.** Ambition has been a leitmotif through this course.
- C.** We have seen, however, that ambition can be disastrous without capability and an understanding of the dangers of *hybris*—outrageous arrogance.
- D.** But history also shows that great things can be achieved when ambition is supported by capability and tempered by a sense of moderation.

Essential Reading:

Plutarch, *Antony*.

Supplementary Reading:

Grant, *Rome*, pp. 213–246.

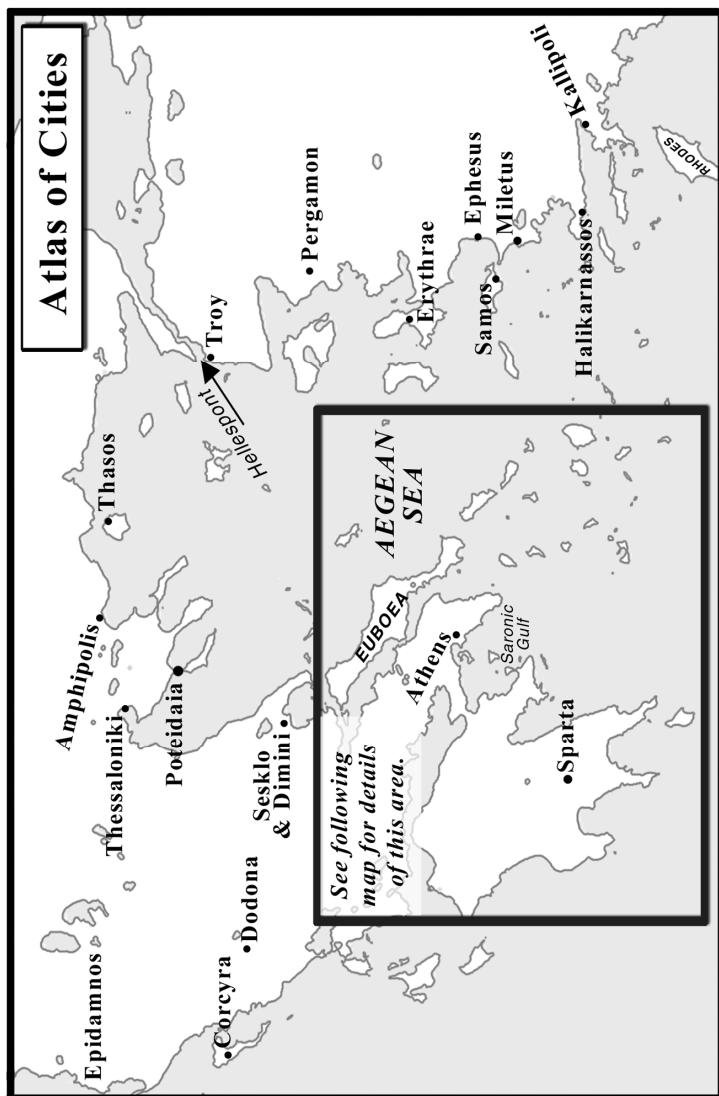
Holbl, *Ptolemaic Empire*.

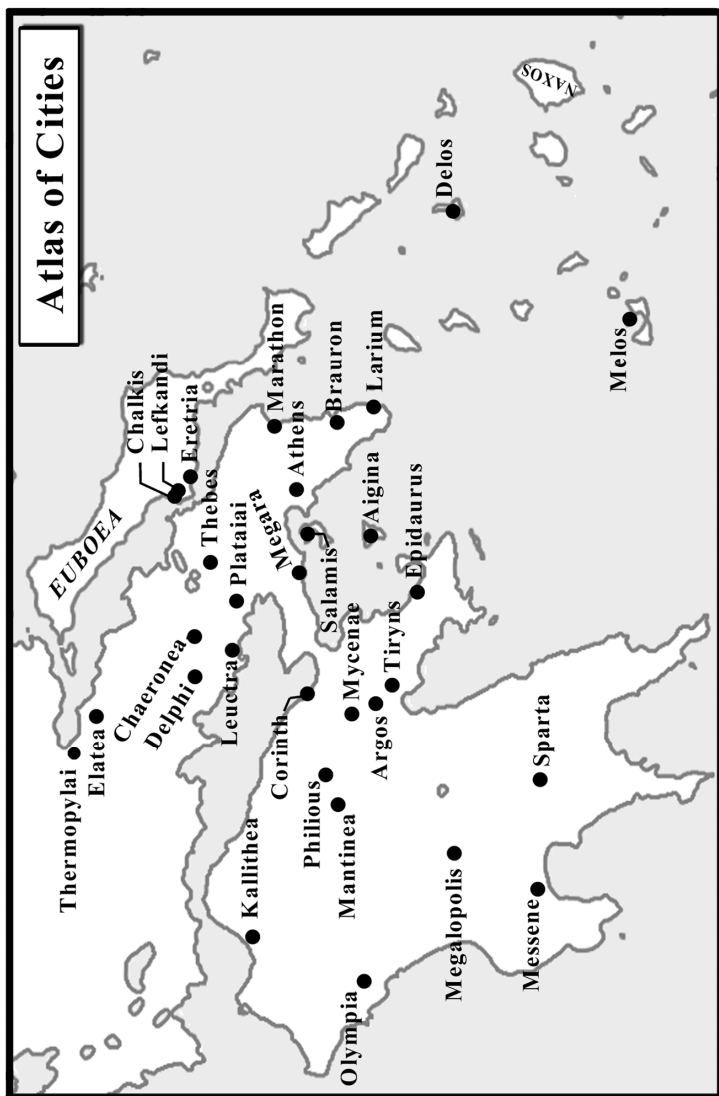
Pomeroy, *Greece*, pp. 446–475.

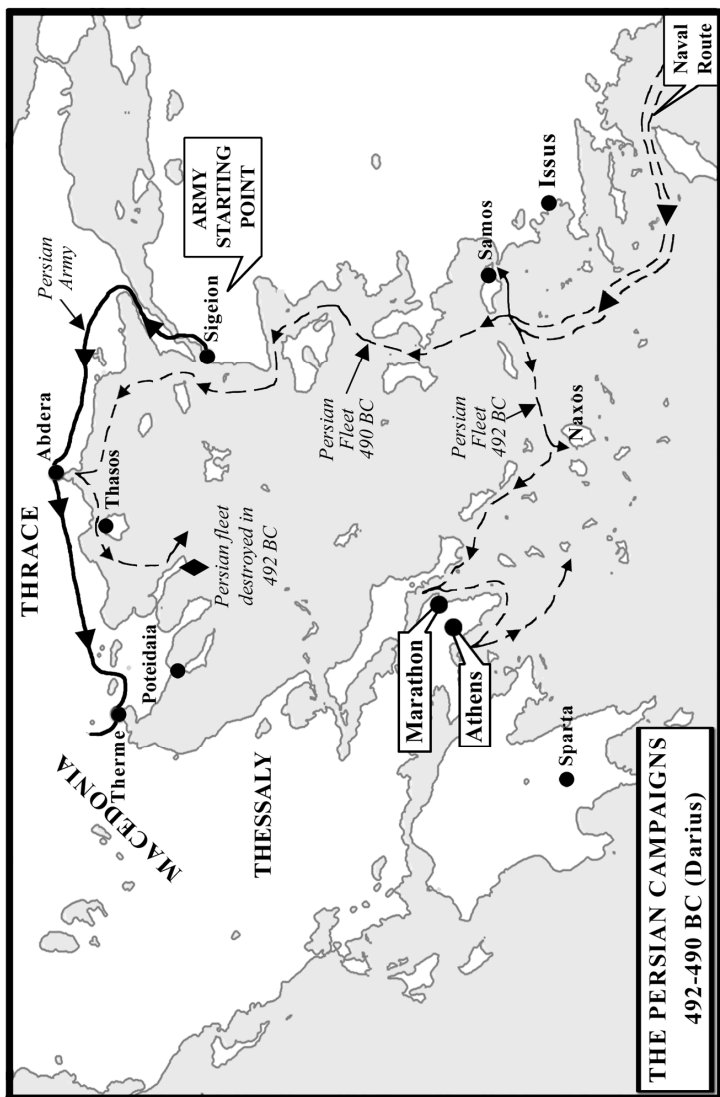
Questions to Consider:

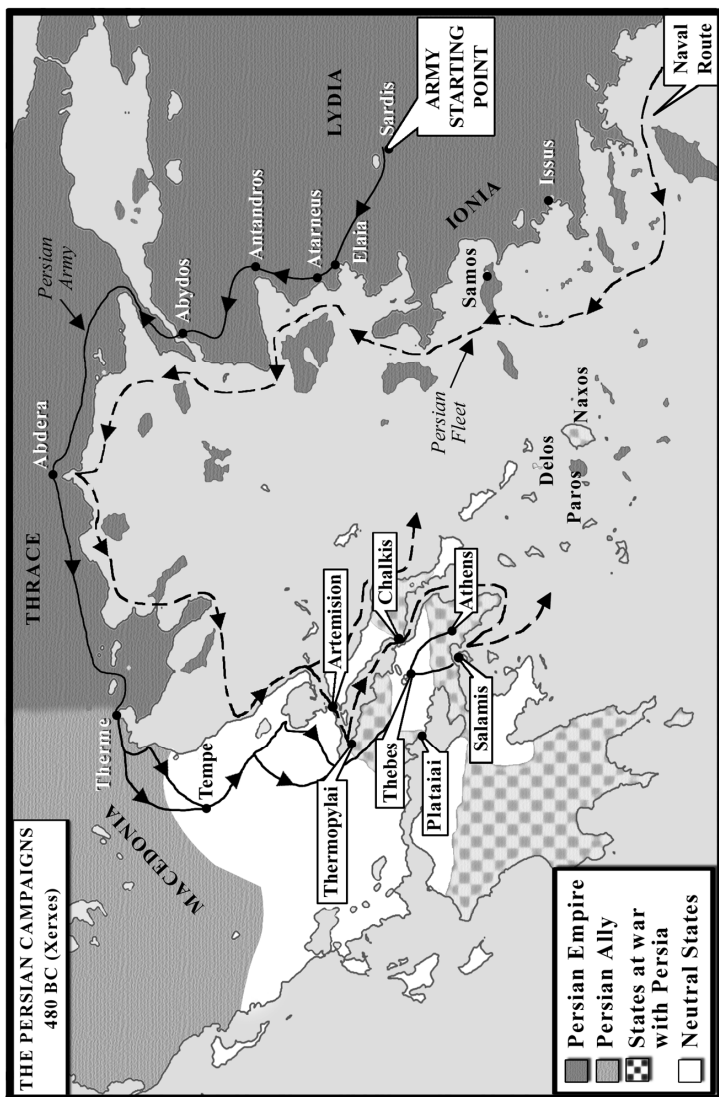
1. In all our lectures on “Famous Greeks,” we have discussed only two women. Plutarch included no women in his *Lives of the Famous Greeks and Romans*. Why is this?
2. Was Antony or Cleopatra the driving force in the struggle against Octavian?

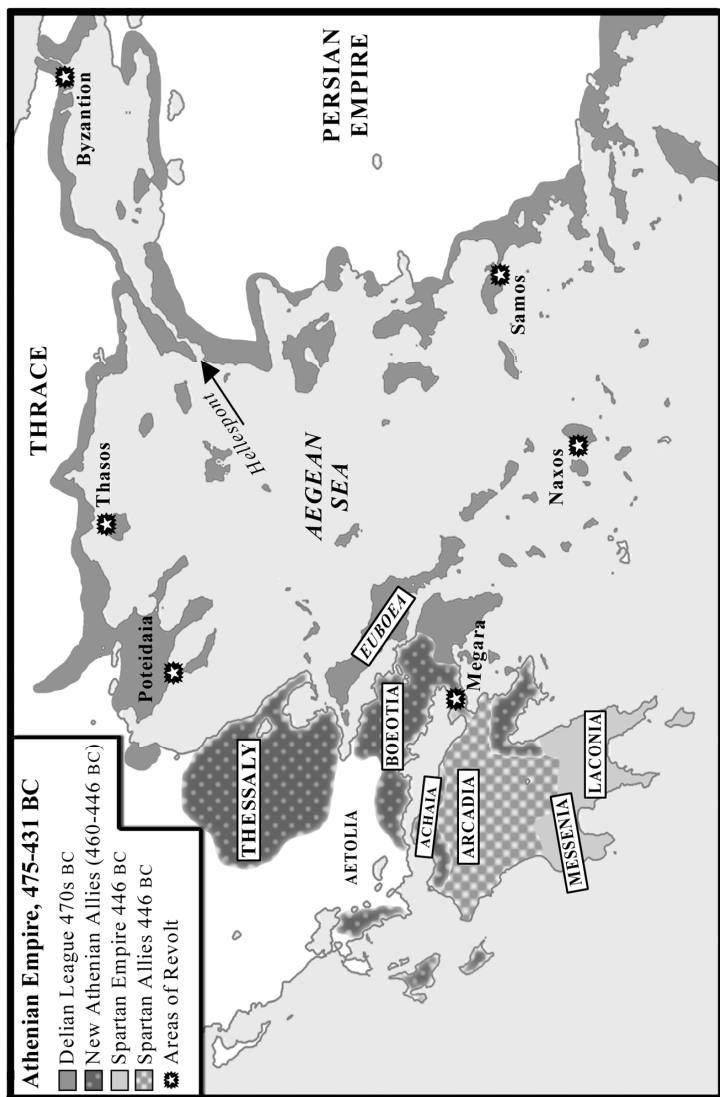
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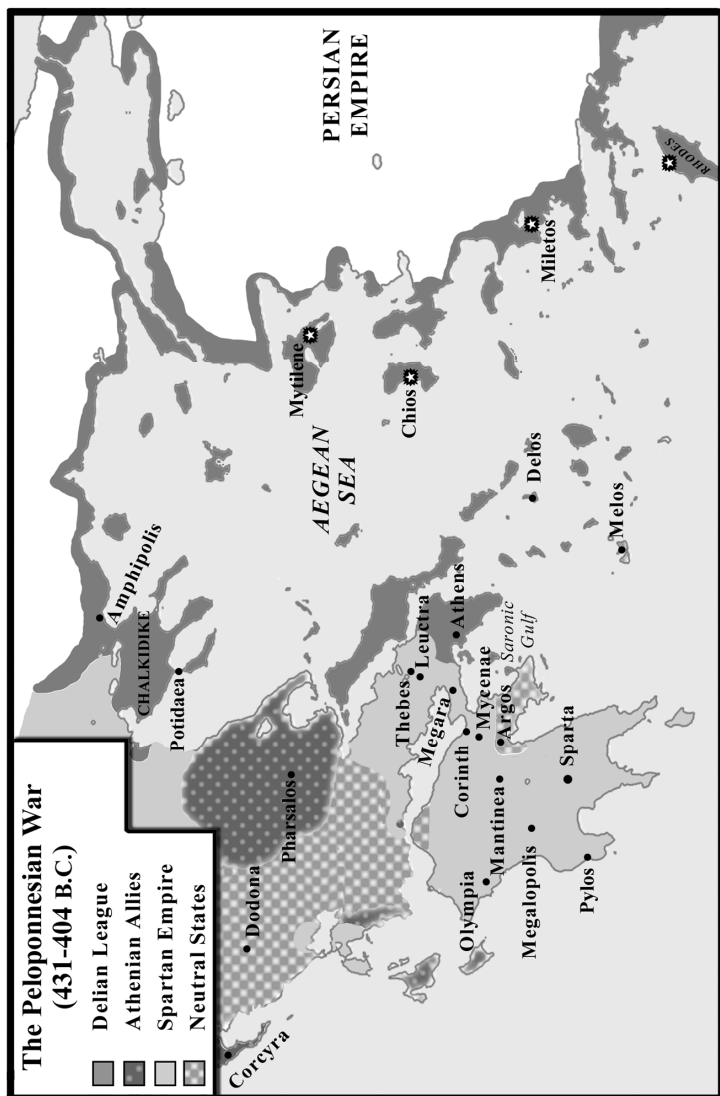


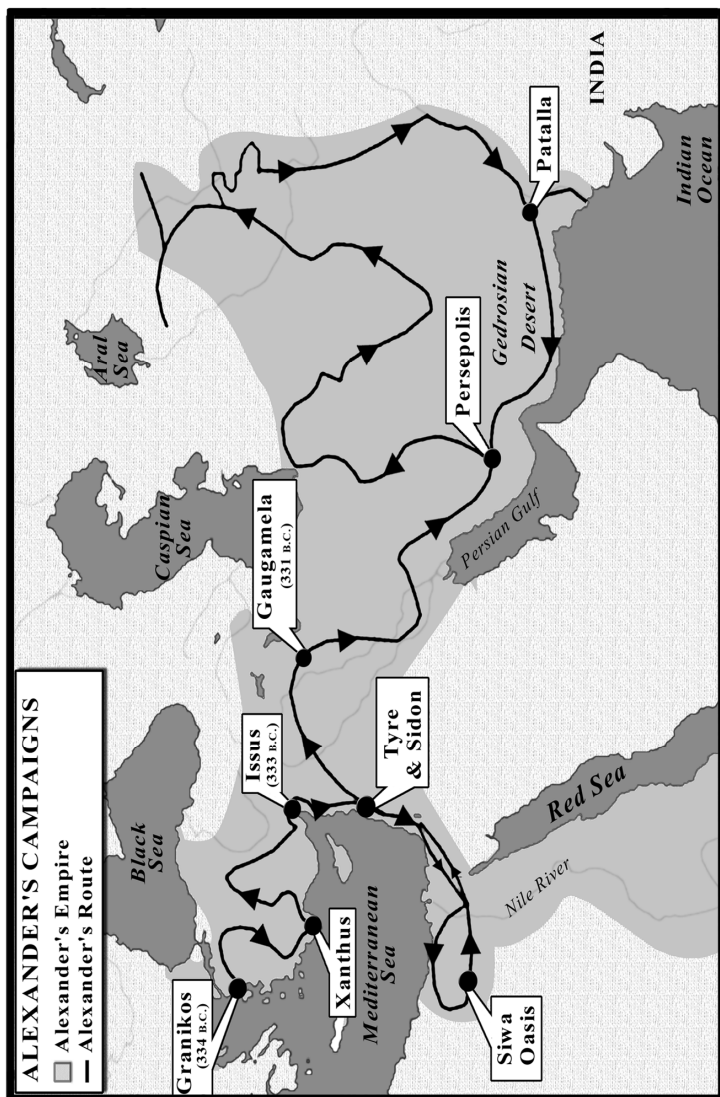












Timeline

(All Dates B.C.)

In recording years for events in Greek history, it is important to note one fact: In classical Greece, there was no common means of reckoning years. Each city-state had its own calendar and its own date for beginning the new year. In Athens, the year began in mid-summer. Therefore, one Athenian year crosses over two years by our chronological system. Thus, to give one, example, the year in which Solon was Archon, or one of the chief magistrates at Athens, should technically be given as 594/593 B.C.

- c. 1300 In mythology, the age of Theseus and Hercules. In archaeology, the Late Helladic Period, the highpoint of Mycenaean civilization in Greece.
- c. 1260–1250 One of the traditional dates for the Trojan War and one that fits the archaeological evidence.
- c. 1250–1200. In archaeology and historical records, a period of political and social dislocation on a large scale, throughout the eastern Mediterranean world, which continued for at least two centuries in many areas. In Greece, the collapse of Mycenaean civilization. In Asia Minor, the fall of the Hittite Empire. In Egypt, the time of the invading “Sea Peoples,” some of whom have been thought to be Greeks. The time generally associated with the Exodus of the Israelites and the conquest of Canaan.
- c. 1050 Beginning of Greek colonization of Asia Minor.
- c. 750–725 B.C. The Age of Homer.
- c. 750 *Iliad*.
- c. 725 *Odyssey*.

c. 750	End of the Greek “Dark Ages” following the collapse of Mycenaean civilization. Major historical developments in the Greek world: (1) writing in Greek alphabet, (2) emergence of city-state (<i>polis</i>) as dominant political and social form, (3) colonization of Sicily and Italy, (4) traditional date of first Olympic Games (776)
594/3	Traditional date of Solon’s archonship at Athens and, hence, of his reforms.
561–527	Dictatorship of Pisistratus at Athens.
560–546	Croesus, King of Lydia.
c. 557–530	Cyrus, King of Persia and rise of Persian Empire.
c. 522–486	Darius, King of Persia; Persian Empire reaches its height.
508	Beginning of Athenian democracy with reforms of Cleisthenes.
490	Battle of Marathon.
486–465	Xerxes, King of Persia.
480–479	Xerxes’s invasion of Greece.
478	Rise of Athenian Empire.
472	The <i>Persians</i> of Aeschylus performed at Athens, probably our earliest extant Greek tragedy.
462	Reforms at Athens established radical democracy.
462–429	Pericles leading political figure at Athens.

462–446	Hostility and periods of armed conflict between Sparta and Athens.
446	Peace treaty between Athens and Sparta. Greece divided into two major power blocks: Athenians and their allies and Spartans and their allies.
c. 445	Herodotus read his <i>Histories</i> to Athenian audience and was rewarded with a gift of ten talents, an enormous sum of money.
447–407	Building program at Athens, erection of Parthenon and other temples and sculptures that would forever define the term “classical.”
444	Probable date for performance of <i>Antigone</i> by Sophocles.
431	Outbreak of Peloponnesian War.
430–428	Plague at Athens.
429	Probable date of performance of <i>Oedipus the King</i> by Sophocles.
429	Death of Pericles.
427	Socrates savagely caricatured in Aristophanes’s comedy <i>The Clouds</i> .
421	Peace of Nicias brought first part of Peloponnesian War to an end. The peace proved to be only temporary.
418	Renewal of armed conflict between Sparta and Athens.
415	<i>Trojan Women</i> of Euripides performed at Athens.
415–413	Athenian expedition to Sicily.

415	Alcibiades went into exile, first in Sparta, then in Persia.
413	Revolt of Athenian allies following the disastrous defeat in Sicily.
411	<i>Lysistrata</i> of Aristophanes performed at Athens.
411	Temporary overthrow of democracy at Athens.
410	Restoration of Athenian democracy and its empire under leadership of Alcibiades.
406	Alcibiades exiled for second time. Athenian victory at Arginusae. Socrates spoke out against illegal trial of generals following the battle.
405	Decisive Spartan victory at Aegospotami.
404	Unconditional surrender of Athens and end of Peloponnesian War.
404–403	Overthrow of Athenian democracy and establishment of tyrannical oligarchy (“the thirty tyrants”). Among the leaders of the tyranny were pupils of Socrates.
403	Restoration of Athenian democracy.
401	Xenophon marched with the Persian prince Cyrus in the failed expedition to gain the throne (<i>Anabasis</i>).
399	Trial and execution of Socrates.
404–336	Gradual failure of the city-state. Sparta, Athens, and Thebes all failed in their attempts to become masters of the Greek world.

c. 385	Plato founded the Academy at Athens.
359–336	Philip, King of Macedonia.
c. 343–338	Aristotle tutor to Alexander the Great.
338	Macedonian victory at the Battle of Chaeronea.
336–323	Alexander the Great.
323–281	Struggle for power among the successors of Alexander the Great. Rise of Hellenistic world.
323–282	Ptolemy I established Greco-Macedonian kingdom in Egypt and line of rulers that would extend to Cleopatra VII (30 B.C.).
280–275	Pyrrhus in Italy.
270	Rome master of Italy.
264–241	Roman victory over Carthage in First Punic War established Rome as a major power in the western Mediterranean.
218–201	Roman victory over Carthage in Second Punic War (Hannibal) established Rome as master of western Mediterranean.
200–167	Roman victories in a series of wars against the Hellenistic monarchies and other Greek states established Rome as master of Mediterranean world.
146	Roman destruction of city of Corinth marked absolute dominance of Rome over Greek political life.
63–44	Rise of Julius Caesar.
44	Caesar assassinated.

41–31	Political struggle between Octavian and Marc Antony ended at the Battle of Actium with total victory of Octavian.
30	Suicide of Cleopatra.

Glossary

academy: The teaching and research institute established by Plato in Athens c. 385 B.C. It continued until it was ordered closed by the emperor Justinian in A.D. 529.

acropolis: A hill in Athens that was the sacred center of the city and lavishly adorned with temples and other shrines, including the Parthenon. It was the focal point of Pericles's building program.

Argos: City-state in the Peloponnese, which was the traditional rival and enemy of Sparta.

Asia Minor: Classical term to describe the area now known as Turkey.

assembly: A modern term to translate the Greek *ekklesia*. In the Athenian democracy and in the balanced constitution of Sparta, this was the legislative body, which was composed of all male citizens and was the sovereign power.

ate: moral blindness

Attica: The territory of the city-state of Athens, roughly 1,000 square miles.

Carthage: A city-state and one of the most significant nations in classical history. Located in North Africa in modern Tunisia, Carthage was originally a colony of the Phoenician city of Tyre and the Carthaginians were Phoenician in language and religion. A republic, Carthage became a major imperial power, ruling an empire in North Africa and Spain. Until its defeat by Rome in the First Punic War (264–241 B.C.), Carthage was a constant threat to the Greek cities of Sicily and Italy.

city-state: Modern term to translate Greek *polis*. In classical Greece, the city-state was the dominant political organization. Greece consisted of hundreds of independent city-states, each an independent nation. Some, like Delos, were only a few square miles in size. Others, like Athens, were more 1,000 miles. The city-state rested on the concept of collective political authority as opposed to monarchy.

comedy: Dramatic productions of a comic nature performed each year at Athens. Like tragedy, they were performed as religious rites in honor of the god Dionysus. Again, like tragedy, comedy served as a forum for the public consideration of political issues. In the fifth century, the comedies offered

biting satire on politics, politicians, and other public figures. Aristophanes was the most famous and greatest of the writers of comedy in ancient Athens.

Corcyra: Island city-state in northwestern Greece. It was a bitter enemy of Corinth, and its alliance with Athens in 433 B.C. was an important step in the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.

Corinth: Major Greek city-state, a commercial power and member of the Peloponnesian League.

Coronea: Town in Boeotia, site of two battles. In 447 B.C., Thebans defeated Athenians. In 394, Spartans defeated Thebans.

Delphi: Site of the Oracle of Apollo, the most famous and authoritative oracle in the Greek world. Such supernatural sources of advice were an essential element in the decision-making process of the Greek city-state. Delphi was a major source of advice in such matters as cult, political reform, and colonization.

Ephors: Political office at Sparta. It consisted of a board of five members, elected annually. The *Ephors* were mediators between the people and the kings and acted as a check on the power of both. The *Ephors* were important in the conduct of foreign policy.

Epidamnus: City-state in northwestern Greece. Civil war in Epidamnus provided the spark that led to the Peloponnesian War.

funeral oration: A characteristic custom of the Athenian democracy was a eulogy given by a distinguished citizen at the public funeral of those who had died in war. By far, the most famous of these speeches was that given in the first year of the Peloponnesian War (winter 431/430) and recorded by Thucydides (II. 35–46). Pericles used the occasion to celebrate the values of the Athenian democracy. His funeral oration has frequently been compared with Lincoln's Gettysburg Address.

Hegemon: a leader in the Greek world.

Hellenistic: Conventional term to describe Greek history and civilization in the period from the death of Alexander (323 B.C.) to the defeat of Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium (31 B.C.).

hoplite: Heavily armed Greek infantryman. See Lecture Nine.

Hybris (*hybris*—not *hubris*—is the only correct transliteration): Greek moral concept, best translated as “outrageous arrogance.” See Lecture Seven.

Ionia: Classical term to describe the central coast of Asia Minor. Greeks, starting c. 1050, colonized it. In the historical period, close ties bound Ionia to Athens. It came under the rule first of Croesus, then of Persia. The revolt of the Ionian Greeks in 499 B.C. was the starting point of the Persian Wars.

Knossos: City in Crete. In the Bronze Age, it was the site of an elaborate palace complex that has been associated with the mythological figure of King Minos and the Minotaur.

Marathon, Battle of: Battle in 490 B.C. between Persians and Athenians at a site twenty-six miles from Athens. The Athenian victory put a temporary halt to the plans of King Darius to conquer Athens. It was a decisive moment in the history of Athens and in the history of freedom.

Megara: A small but significant city-state. It was a member of the Peloponnesian League and participated actively in the Persian Wars. A near neighbor of Athens, it was economically dependent on Athens and played an important role in the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War.

oligarchy: “Rule by the few.” In classical political thought, oligarchy was a form of government in which political power was confined to a minority of citizens, frequently on the basis of property qualifications.

Parthenon: Temple of Athena the Virgin Goddess (Parthenos) on the Acropolis at Athens.

Peloponnesian League: Modern term to describe the League of the Spartans and their allies. See Lecture Nine.

polis: See city-state.

Sicyon: Greek city-state and member of the Peloponnesian League.

sophists: The term literally means “wise men.” We might best translate it by “professors.” Traveling throughout the Greek world, sophists taught and lectured for large fees. They represented a diversity of views, but in the public mind, sophists were associated with the questioning of traditional values. In Athens, education by a sophist, especially in rhetoric, was a key to a successful career in politics. The attitudes and approaches of the sophists were fundamental to the development of scientific medicine, to the

historical work of Thucydides, to the political thought of Pericles, and to the philosophical message of Socrates.

strategy: As used in these lectures, strategy is the means of winning a war, as opposed to tactics, the winning of a battle.

Strategos: a military general

Syracuse: Leading Greek city-state of Sicily and one of the richest and most powerful cities in the ancient world.

Thalassocracy: a naval empire

Thebes: A major Greek city-state, the chief city of the area of Boeotia.

Thessaly: A major geographical area of northern Greece divided into a number of city-states, of which Larissa, Pherae, and Pharsalus were the chief.

thrace: Area in northeast Greece. The Thracians were a non-Greek people.

tragedy: Dramatic performance put on each year at Athens in honor of the god Dionysus and providing a public forum for the consideration of political issues.

trireme: Greek warship. See Lecture Ten.

Biographical Notes

Aeschylus (525–456 B.C.). Athenian playwright. Along with Euripides and Sophocles, Aeschylus was one of the three greatest tragedians. He fought at the Battle of Marathon. His play *The Persians* was produced in 472 and is probably our earliest extant Greek drama. It is also the only extant drama to be set in the poet's own day rather than in the mythological past. His *Oresteia*, dealing with the murder of Agamemnon and its consequences is our only extant trilogy. At the tragic festivals, each playwright put on three plays (a trilogy), generally dealing with a connected theme. The tragedies of Aeschylus reflected his deep concern with liberty, law, and justice.

Aristophanes (c. 450–385 B.C.). Athenian playwright. The greatest fifth-century writer of comedy and the only one whose plays have survived. Like the tragedians, he was an Athenian citizen. He was a poet of genius. His plays reflected the intense involvement in politics characteristic of the Athenian democracy. Aristophanes caricatured, frequently in savage terms, such leading figures as Pericles, Cleon, Euripides, and Socrates. He was a patriot who made comedy a vehicle for consideration of the most significant issues of the day, intellectual, artistic, as well as political. His last plays, produced after the end of the Peloponnesian War, reflect the way in which the Athenian audience had turned away from an intense involvement in politics.

Augustus (63 B.C.–14 A.D.). Roman statesman. Born Gaius Octavius, he was the great nephew and adopted son of Julius Caesar. Modern historians generally refer to him as Octavian during his early political career (44–27 B.C.), from his adopted name, Gaius Julius Caesar Octavianus. Building on his relationship with the martyred Caesar, Octavian, at the age of nineteen, raised an army on his own initiative. With astounding political skills, he achieved absolute mastery over the Roman world, winning a decisive victory over Marc Antony and Cleopatra at the Battle of Actium in 31 B.C. He then carried out a series of political, military, economic, and social reforms that successfully transformed Rome from a republic to a monarchy. He brought peace and prosperity to the Roman Empire that endured for two centuries. In 27 B.C., to mark the inauguration of his new order, he was granted a new name: Imperator Caesar Divi Filius Augustus. And it is by the name of Augustus that this most gifted of statesmen is known to history.

Caesar, Gaius Julius (100–44 B.C.). Roman statesman. From one of the most distinguished Roman families, Caesar grew up in a turbulent period of political disturbance and civil war. His political career got off to a slow start. He was regarded as only one of many corrupt aspiring politicians in Rome. However, his term as consul in 59 B.C. revealed his remarkable political talents. His term as governor and campaigns in Gaul (58–52 B.C.) showed him to be, with Alexander the Great, one of the two greatest generals in history. Civil war with Pompey made Caesar absolute master of the Roman world. His vision was to transform Rome into a monarchy. This ambition led to his assassination in 44 B.C. His adopted son, Augustus, would transform Caesar's vision into reality.

Charmides (d. 403 B.C.). Athenian politician. Born of an aristocratic family, Charmides was the uncle of Plato. A student of Socrates, he was encouraged by his teacher to enter political life. He was an active participant in the overthrow of the democracy in 404 and was killed with Critias, fighting against the reestablishment of the democratic government.

Critias (c. 460–403). Athenian politician. Born of an aristocratic family, Critias was a close relative of Plato. He was a student of Socrates and wrote poetry and plays. After the surrender of Athens to Sparta in the Peloponnesian War, Critias was a moving force in the overthrow of the democracy and the establishment of an authoritarian regime. This was a narrow oligarchy, "the thirty tyrants." The oligarchy ruled through terror, executing opponents and confiscating property. Critias was the most ruthless and unscrupulous of all, an ancient counterpart to Lenin. He was killed in battle, fighting against a restoration of the democracy.

Cyrus I (559–529 B.C.). King and founder of the Persian Empire. The version of his birth in Herodotus relates the myth of a foundling, common to the stories of Moses and Romulus. According to this account, Cyrus was the grandson of the king of the Medes, exposed at birth and raised by a shepherd. He became king of the Persians, at that time a minor Iranian tribe. By 549, Cyrus had overthrown the kingdom of Media. By the time of his death in 529, the Persians had conquered Lydia, Babylon, and central Asia, establishing an empire unprecedented in size and power. To later Greeks, especially Xenophon, Cyrus became the model of a good king and an argument in favor of monarchy over democracy.

Cyrus (c. 430–401 B.C.). Persian prince. One of the sons of the Persian King Darius II, Cyrus was appointed governor of Asia Minor during the

last years of the Peloponnesian War. His support of Lysander and the Spartan cause played a fundamental role in the defeat of Athens. The Persian king kept a harem, and there were numerous possible successors to the throne. Having lost out to his brother Artaxerxes, Cyrus raised an army, including Xenophon and 10,000 Greek mercenaries. The expedition failed when Cyrus was killed in battle against his brother at Cunaxa. The return of the Greek mercenaries from hostile territory to safety was immortalized by Xenophon in his *Anabasis*.

Demosthenes (384–322 B.C.). Athenian statesman. Robbed of his inheritance, Demosthenes became an orator in an effort to regain his legacy. This effort failed, but his skills made him one of the most powerful and effective orators ever to speak in the Athenian Assembly. He early recognized the potential danger to Athens of Philip, King of Macedonia. He also, almost alone among his fellow citizens, perceived the ability and ambition of Philip to be master of Greece. It was the tragedy of Demosthenes to have the vision and values of Pericles in an age when the Athenians no longer were willing to pay the price of greatness. At the last moment, he achieved an alliance between Athens and Thebes, which resisted Philip with military force. The defeat at Chaeronea was the result. After the death of Alexander, the patriotism of Demosthenes tried to call forth the overthrow of Macedonian rule. Once again, this effort failed. Demosthenes committed suicide rather than surrender to his political enemies in Athens.

Dion (c. 408–354). Syracusan politician. Dion was a relative and minister of the Syracusan tyrant Dionysius I. Dionysius was one of the most remarkable political figures of his age, defeating Carthage and creating an empire in Sicily and southern Italy. Dion studied in Athens under Plato. After the death of Dionysius I, Dion tried to educate his successor, Dionysius II. He brought Plato to Syracuse for this purpose. Ultimately, Dion seized power himself and proved Lord Acton's maxim that "all power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely." He was assassinated by a friend and fellow pupil of Plato.

Dionysius II (born c. 397). Dictator of Syracuse. Eldest son of Dionysius I, he succeeded his father in 367 and ruled the empire he inherited with some success for ten years. His relative Dion and Plato tried to educate Dionysius II as a philosopher king. He lacked ability, vision, and moral fiber. After a number of bloody coups and counter coups, he retired to Corinth, where he lived many years.

Hippocrates (fifth century B.C.). Traditionally, the founder of scientific medicine. To the ancients, Hippocrates was the embodiment of the ideal physician. Many anecdotes were told of his life and numerous medical treatises ascribed to him. Modern critical scholarship has reduced this attractive figure to a phantom. No single medical treatise is universally agreed to have been written by him, nor do scholars generally agree on any aspect of his life. Hippocrates was said in antiquity to have been born on the island of Cos and to have been a contemporary of Socrates. Plato ascribed to him the view that to understand the nature of the body, we must understand the nature of the whole. He was credited with the idea that disease must be studied as caused by natural, rather than divine, agents, and thus, with an empirical, scientific approach to medicine.

Minos. Legendary king of Crete. In mythology, he was the son of Europa and Zeus. His wife, Pasiphae, became enamored of a bull and brought forth the Minotaur, half man and half bull. To conceal his stepson, Minos built the labyrinth. According to Thucydides, Minos was ruler of a large naval empire. He exacted tribute from Athens. He was killed by treachery in Sicily while pursuing Daedalus, the architect of the labyrinth and accomplice in the adultery of Pasiphae. Knossos was the capital of Minos. Minos has quite naturally been associated with the great palace complex discovered there by Sir Arthur Evans (1851–1941), who gave the name Minoan to the Bronze Age civilization of Crete.

Octavian. See Augustus.

Pisistratus (d. 527 B.C.). Tyrant of Athens. Born of a distinguished family, he gained prominence as a military leader. He was associated with Solon (see Lecture Six). In the political strife following Solon's reform, Pisistratus gained a bodyguard and used it to establish himself as tyrant (dictator) in 560. Driven from power and exiled, he returned with a mercenary army and reestablished his dictatorship in 546. Pisistratus was a "benevolent" dictator. He governed with moderation and prudence. He portrayed himself as ruling by the divine election of the goddess Athena. His dictatorship was an important step in the development of the economic and political power of Athens and its sense of national unity. In these terms, the dictatorship of Pisistratus paved the way for the Athenian democracy. Pisistratus died in power. His sons, Hippias and Hipparchus, were typical examples of evil tyrants. Hipparchus was assassinated in 514. Hippias was driven from power in 510 B.C. He sought refuge at the court of Darius and was with the Persian forces at the Battle of Marathon.

Roxanne (d. 311). Wife of Alexander the Great. She was the daughter of the Bactrian chieftain Oxyartes. Alexander married her in 327 as part of his policy to pacify Bactria and Sogdiana. She was delivered of a son, Alexander IV, born in 323, after the death of Alexander the Great. She and the boy became pawns in the struggle among his successors. They were murdered in Macedonia in 311.

Xanthippe (fifth–early fourth century B.C.). Wife of Socrates. By his own admission, Socrates paid little attention to his wife and children. Socrates would not allow Xanthippe to be present at his death, because her presence would deprive the scene of dignity. In the tradition, she was represented as shrewish. Socrates's relationship with, and attitude toward, his wife was typical of many Athenian marriages. This would be one reason why Pericles sought the company of Aspasia, rather than his own wife.

Bibliography

Note: The Essential Readings focus largely on primary sources. I have recommended as Supplementary Readings books that expand on the material covered in the lectures and other books that place our “Famous Greeks” into the broader political and cultural framework of Greek history.

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Supplementary

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